

Current ENERGY STAR Single-Family New Homes Policy Record

How to Use This Document

EPA regularly receives partner questions and comments regarding various aspects of the program documents. This document is a record of the issues that have been received since the release of the last revision to the program documents. These issues are either pending resolution by EPA or have been resolved, sometimes resulting in modifications that will be incorporated into the next revision of the program documents. The primary purpose of this document is to allow all partners to have equal access to the latest policy issues and resolutions.

EPA intends to formally incorporate policy modifications into the next revision of the program documents. Those edits will then be enforced for homes permitted after a specified transition period, typically 60 days from the release of the revised program requirements. Partners may, at their discretion, use the determinations in this document immediately, in advance of the formal implementation dates. If they do so, they should be sure to document the permit dates of the affected homes and to include a copy of the policy record in the files retained by the Home Energy Rater. Should the need arise, this will allow partners to demonstrate that they acted with the best information available.

Definitions

Each issue listed here is classified as a Change, Clarification, Refinement, Comment, or as an Issue Under Review. These are defined as follows:

- **Change** – The addition, deletion, or modification of a program requirement. A change will typically result from a partner question or feedback indicating that EPA's original intent is not being met or from changes in relevant standards (e.g., ENERGY STAR labeled product requirements, NAECA standards, IECC codes). A change is the most significant type of edit for partners because it is likely to change the way that partners comply with the program.
- **Clarification** – The clarification of a program requirement, typically resulting from a partner question indicating confusion or ambiguity. Clarifications are not intended to significantly change the scope of the program guidelines, but rather to clarify the original intent of the requirement. A clarification is secondary in importance to a change; it should not significantly alter the way that most partners comply with the program.
- **Refinement** – A minor revision, such as an improved choice of words, a grammatical correction, or a correction to a typographical error. A refinement is the least important type of edit; it should have no impact on the way that partners comply with the program.
- **Comment** – A comment provided by EPA in response to a question, which results in no change to the program documents. This may occur, for example, if the question can be answered by referring to already established policy. Aside from the partner asking the question, such comments will typically have no impact on the way that partners comply with the program.
- **Issue Under Review** – An issue that has been submitted and that EPA is still evaluating. Once EPA has evaluated the issue, it will offer a resolution and reclassify the issue using one of the four categories above.

Current ENERGY STAR Single-Family New Homes Policy Record

ID	Log Date	Program Document	Classification	Topic
01261	12/01/2023	All National and Regional Program Requirements (Rev. 12)	Clarification	Partnership, Training, and Credentialing Requirements Section - Raters must be credentialed by oversight organization and complete training prior to inspections
				<p>Issue: Partners have asked about the intent of the requirement that Energy Rating Companies (ERC's) "operate under a Home Certification Organization (HCO)" because the requirements for training, credentials, and oversight generally relate to individual Raters rather than their company.</p> <p>In addition, partners have asked when Raters must complete their EPA-recognized training - prior to conducting any field inspections, prior to filling out either Rater checklist, or prior to certification of the dwelling.</p>
				<p>Resolution: EPA agrees that the oversight requirements are better stated as a requirement of individual Raters, rather than ERC's.</p> <p>Furthermore, EPA's intent is for the Rater to complete training prior to filling out either Rater checklist or conducting any inspections. The closest associated documentation of these events is the Date of Review and Inspection Date entered on the Rater Design Review Checklist and Rater Field Checklist, respectively. Therefore, Rater training must be completed prior to these dates.</p> <p>To clarify this intent, the language in this Section will be adjusted as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • "Energy Rating Companies (e.g., rater companies and Providers) are required to sign an ENERGY STAR Partnership Agreement, which can be found at www.energystar.gov/homesPA, and operate under a Home Certification Organization (HCO). Learn more and find a current list of HCOs at www.energystar.gov/hco. • Raters are required to complete EPA-recognized training, which can be found at www.energystar.gov/newhomestraining, and be credentialed by a Home Certification Organization (HCO) prior to completing inspections. Learn more at www.energystar.gov/hco."
01214	05/01/2023	National Program Requirements	Clarification	Eligibility Requirements Section – Only detached, not attached, Dwellings are eligible to participate

Current ENERGY STAR Single-Family New Homes Policy Record

		(Version 3.1, Rev. 12)		<p>Issue: Partners have asked whether only detached Dwellings are eligible to be certified using the Single-Family New Homes (SFNH) program, or if attached Dwellings may also be certified.</p> <p>The Eligibility Requirements state that Dwellings (e.g., single-family homes and duplexes) and Townhouses may be certified using the Single-Family New Homes program. In contrast to Townhouses, which are explicitly defined as attached structures, the definition of Dwelling does not distinguish between detached and attached structures: “..any building that contains one or two Dwelling Units used, intended, or designed to be built, used, rented, leased, let or hired out to be occupied, or that are occupied for living purposes.”</p> <p>Through the examples of Dwellings that are listed (single-family homes and duplexes), however, EPA intended to convey that only detached structures are eligible to be certified using the SFNH program.</p>
				<p>Resolution: To reinforce the original intent of the scope of the SFNH program, the Eligibility Requirements will be revised as follows:</p> <p>“Site-built or modular <u>detached</u> Dwellings (e.g., single-family homes and duplexes) and Townhouses are eligible to participate in the ENERGY STAR Single-Family New Homes (SFNH) program.”</p>
01313	12/01/2023	National Program Requirements (Version 3.1, Rev. 12)	Clarification	<p>Eligibility Requirements Section – Link to new program document defining applicable program requirements, including the minimum Version and Revision, to which a home is eligible to be certified</p> <p>Issue: The Eligibility Requirements Section defines what types of homes are eligible to participate in the SFNH program. However, it does not define the applicable program requirements, including the minimum version and revision, to which a home in a particular location is eligible to be certified. This is currently defined in the Effective Date Section of the same program document. Combining the two sections, such that all requirements related to eligibility are located in a single section, would be clearer.</p> <p>Furthermore, the current Effective Date Section lacks, or only implies, certain information that would be clearer if stated explicitly, including: a) expanding the table to include which program version(s) are applicable to homes in all locations; b) expanding the table to include, where applicable, both the national version and regional version of the program requirements to which a home is eligible to be certified; and c) a statement that the listed versions are the minimum required; therefore, homes are eligible to be certified to higher versions of the same program.</p>

Current ENERGY STAR Single-Family New Homes Policy Record

				<p>Resolution: To more clearly convey all eligibility requirements, the Effective Date Section, as well as Footnote 14 and 15, will be deleted and the following sentence will be added to the Eligibility Requirements Section:</p> <p><u>“To determine the applicable SFNH program requirements, including the minimum Version and Revision, to which a home is eligible to be certified, visit www.energystar.gov/SFNHVersions.”</u></p> <p>The new program document linked to in the sentence above will contain the applicable program requirements, including the minimum Version and Revision, for all locations; will include, where applicable, both the national version and regional version of the program requirements to which a home is eligible to be certified; and will state that the listed versions are the minimum required; therefore, homes are eligible to be certified to higher versions of the same program.</p>
01225	05/01/2023	National Program Requirements (Version 3.1, Rev. 12)	Clarification	<p>ENERGY STAR Certification Process Section - Pre-drywall inspection is always required</p> <p>Issue: Partners have periodically asked if there are alternative verification protocols available when a builder installs drywall before a home has had a pre-drywall inspection by the Rater.</p> <p>Step 4 of the ENERGY STAR Certification Process states that “the Rater must review all items on the National Rater checklists.. In the event that an item on a National Rater checklist cannot be inspected by the Rater, the home also cannot earn the ENERGY STAR.”</p> <p>In addition, ANSI / RESNET / ICC 301 requires visual inspection of multiple Minimum Rated Features per Normative Appendix B, including framing members and wall insulation installation, which cannot be completed if the features are concealed.</p> <p>Given these current policies, the only recourse when drywall has been installed prior to visual verification is to remove the drywall to allow the inspection of Minimum Rated Features of ANSI / RESNET / ICC 301 as well as the mandatory features of the ENERGY STAR Single-Family New Homes program (e.g. minimum insulation levels, Grade I or II insulation, air sealing details, a complete air barrier, advanced framing details, and ductwork installed without kinks and bends). No alternative protocol has been identified that will deliver the same certainty as a pre-drywall inspection that all program requirements have been met.</p> <p>Resolution: To reinforce EPA’s current policy that a pre-drywall inspection is always required, and that drywall must be entirely removed to fully verify all Items if it has been installed prior to the inspection, Step 4 will be revised as follows:</p>

Current ENERGY STAR Single-Family New Homes Policy Record

				<p>“Using a Rater, verify that all requirements have been met in accordance with the Mandatory Requirements for All Certified Homes and with the inspection procedures for minimum rated features in ANSI / RESNET / ICC 301, Appendix B. <u>This will require a minimum of two inspections: one at pre-drywall and the other at final.</u>”</p>
01302	12/01/2023	National Program Requirements (Version 3.1, Rev. 12)	Change	<p>ENERGY STAR Certification Process – Sunset of sampling protocols</p>
				<p>Issue: In July 2023, EPA held a stakeholder feedback period for a proposed sunset of sampling for the ENERGY STAR Single-Family New Homes (SFNH) program and for all townhouses.</p> <p>When first conceived, the sampling allowance was designed, in part, to broaden the reach of the ENERGY STAR program. Today, however, the use of sampling is prevalent only in a single market (Arizona), and outside of that state, more than 95% of single-family certifications in 2022 were based on individual inspections of each home.</p> <p>Because the data indicate that the national market at large has moved to individual inspections of homes, EPA believes it is appropriate to sunset the use of sampling for the ENERGY STAR Single-Family New Homes program.</p> <p>To provide greater assurance that all program requirements have been met in every certified home, EPA proposed to sunset the allowance to use sampling inspection protocols in the ENERGY STAR Single-Family New Homes program for homes permitted on or after 01/01/2025.</p> <p>Further, townhouses were proposed to not be allowed to use sampling inspection protocols, even when certified using the ENERGY STAR Multifamily New Construction (MFNC) program. However, all other building types eligible to be certified using the ENERGY STAR MFNC program would continue to be permitted to use sampling inspection protocols.</p> <p>EPA posted a response to comments and a finalized policy announcement in alignment with the proposal in the Fall of 2023.</p>
				<p>Resolution: To reflect the sunset of the allowance to use sampling inspection protocols in the ENERGY STAR Single-Family New Homes program for homes permitted on or after 01/01/2025, the following sentence will be added to Step 4 of the ENERGY STAR Certification Process:</p> <p>“Using a Rater, verify that all requirements have been met in accordance with the Mandatory Requirements for All Certified Homes and with the inspection procedures for minimum rated</p>

Current ENERGY STAR Single-Family New Homes Policy Record

				<p>features in ANSI / RESNET / ICC 301, Appendix B. <u>All items shall be verified for each certified home and sampling protocols shall not be used.</u></p> <p>In addition, Footnote 10, which included the allowance to use sampling, will be deleted.</p>
01284	12/01/2023	National Program Requirements (Version 3.1, Rev. 12)	Clarification	<p>ENERGY STAR Certification Process Section – Raters are to verify that items have been met within program-defined tolerances; not use discretion to discern intent of items</p>
				<p>Issue: The Certification Process Section contains statements regarding the verification of items on the program checklists that may incorrectly imply that Raters have the authority to interpret program intent, potentially leading to inconsistent implementation of the program requirements. Instead, it is the responsibility of EPA to ensure that each program requirement is sufficiently clear that all Raters can implement that policy consistently.</p> <p>Rather, the purpose of these statements was to clarify that minor deviations from a stated program requirement may be acceptable. Since the time that this language was first drafted, EPA has worked to define quantitative tolerances (e.g., Rater-measured ventilation rate must be within either ± 15 CFM or $\pm 15\%$ of design report value) to more clearly define how much variation is acceptable.</p>
				<p>Resolution: To better convey that Raters are to verify that checklist items have been met within program-defined tolerances, the following edits will be made to the Certification Process section:</p> <p>“The Rater must review all items on the National Rater checklists. Raters are expected to use their experience and discretion to verify that the overall intent of each inspection checklist item has been met within program-defined tolerances (i.e., identifying major defects that undermine the intent of the checklist item versus identifying minor defects that the Rater may deem acceptable).”</p> <p>In the event that a Rater <u>determines that a program requirement has not been met</u> finds an item that is inconsistent with the intent of the checklists, the home cannot earn the ENERGY STAR until the item is corrected...</p> <p>In the event that a Rater is not able to determine whether <u>a program requirement has been met</u> an item is consistent with the intent (e.g., an alternative method of meeting a checklist requirement has been proposed), then the Rater shall consult their Provider.</p>

Current ENERGY STAR Single-Family New Homes Policy Record

				<p>If EPA believes the current program requirements are sufficiently clear to determine whether the item in question intent has been met, then this guidance will be provided to the partner and enforced beginning with the house in question.”</p> <p>In addition, the following minor edit will be made to Footnote 5 for consistency:</p> <p>“Certification shall only be allowed if the Rater has determined that no equivalent option is available that could meet the intent of the conflicting requirement (e.g., switching from exterior to interior slab edge insulation).”</p>
01236	12/01/2023	National Program Requirements (Version 3.1, Rev. 12)	Refinement	Exhibit 1 – Removal of EER for cooling and heating equipment
				<p>Issue: Exhibit 1 includes an EER value for certain air conditioners and heat pumps, which may imply that such values must be met for a home to be certified. However, in practice, there is no requirement that equipment meet this level of efficiency. EER is not included in the ENERGY STAR Reference Design in the ERI Target Procedure. Furthermore, for air conditioners and air-source heat pumps, EER is not a minimum rated feature in ANSI / RESNET / ICC 301, the standard that underlies the performance target. As a result, such an input would not impact the performance of the home. For these reasons, displaying EER in this Exhibit could cause confusion for partners.</p> <p>Additionally, the Multifamily New Construction Program will be removing all instances of EER requirements for air-source heat pumps and air conditioners in the corresponding Exhibit for that program, so making the same edit for the Single-Family New Homes program would improve consistency.</p>
				<p>Resolution: For improved consistency and clarity, all instances of EER values for air-source heat pumps and air conditioners in Exhibit 1 will be removed. For example, the following edit will be made to the Mixed and Cold Climate column for Residential Heating Equipment:</p> <p>“CZ 4: 8.5 HSPF / 15 SEER /12 EER air-source w/ electric or dual-fuel backup,”</p>
01254	12/01/2023	National Program Requirements (Version 3.1, Rev. 12)	Refinement	Exhibit 1 – ESRD configured with ASHP instead of GSHP in Climate Zone 7 and 8
				<p>Issue: Policy Record Entry 01129 revised the Version 3.1 National ERI Target procedure to configure the ENERGY STAR Reference Design with an Air-Source Heat Pump instead of a Ground-Source Heat Pump. However, the corresponding change was inadvertently not made to Exhibit 1 of this document, which could potentially cause confusion.</p>

Current ENERGY STAR Single-Family New Homes Policy Record

				<p>Resolution: To reduce potential confusion and fully implement the change described in Policy Record Entry 01129, the Mixed and Cold Climate Heating Equipment for Climate Zones 7 and 8 in Exhibit 1 will be revised as follows:</p> <p>“• CZ 7-8: 9.2 HSPF / 16 SEER air-source 3.6 COP / 17.1 EER ground-source w/ electric or dual-fuel backup”.</p>
01240	12/01/2023	National Program Requirements (Version 3.1, Rev. 12)	Refinement	<p>Exhibit 2 – HVAC contractor may be required to provide documentation in Track A</p>
				<p>Issue: This Exhibit lists the mandatory requirements for all certified homes. For the HVAC Installing Contractor, it states the following:</p> <p>“None. While the HVAC contractor plays a critical role in properly installing and commissioning a system, the Rater is the party responsible for assessing its installation quality in accordance with ANSI / RESNET / ACCA / ICC 310.”</p> <p>While HVAC contractors are not required to complete any program checklists, Partners have noted that the HVAC contractor is required in some cases to provide documentation to the Rater to support their assessment, most notably regarding the refrigerant system when the Weigh-In Method of ANSI / RESNET / ACCA / ICC 310 is used. The current language may create confusion by implying that they have no role in supporting the Rater’s assessment.</p>
				<p>Resolution: To reduce potential confusion, the language will be revised as follows:</p> <p>“None. While the HVAC contractor plays a critical role in properly installing and commissioning a system, the Rater is the party responsible for assessing its installation quality in accordance with, per ANSI / RESNET / ACCA / ICC 310. <u>However, the installing contractor may be required to provide documentation to support the Rater’s assessment (e.g., regarding the refrigerant system).</u>”</p>
01267	12/01/2023	National Program Requirements (Version 3.1, Rev. 12)	Change	<p>Exhibit 3 – Removal of Provider discretion to define ‘Permit Date’ and addition of allowance to use Rater’s first site visit</p>
				<p>Issue: Exhibit 3 defines which Versions and Revisions are required to be used and is dependent, in part, on the permit date of homes. A footnote associated with this exhibit delineates the various ways that the permit date can be determined and includes an allowance for Providers to use their discretion when determining it. The allowance to use discretion may result in inconsistent implementation of the program requirements.</p>

Current ENERGY STAR Single-Family New Homes Policy Record

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01286	12/01/2023	National Program Requirements (Version 3.1, Rev. 12)	Change	<p>Footnote 15: Continued use of Rev. 08, 09, 10, 11 and 12 HVAC Design Report</p> <p>Issue: Due to the effort required to collect the HVAC Design Report, partners have asked whether previously collected Rev. 08, Rev. 09, Rev. 10, Rev. 11 and Rev. 12 HVAC Design Reports can continue to be used after the release of the next Revision of the program requirements, so long as no aspect of the system design changes.</p> <p>Resolution: Because the next Revision of the program checklists will not require collection of any additional information or impose any new requirements, and will maintain or increase compliance tolerances, a design documented using Rev. 08, Rev. 09, Rev. 10, Rev. 11, or Rev. 12 of the National HVAC Design Report would, by definition, meet the requirements of Rev. 13.</p> <p>Therefore, previously collected Rev. 08, Rev. 09, Rev. 10, Rev. 11, or Rev. 12 National HVAC Design Reports will be permitted to be used after the release of the next Revision of the program requirements, so long as no aspect of the building design changes. For building designs that are not identical to prior designs (e.g., due to new equipment that is rated in SEER2 instead of SEER), then a new HVAC Design Report must be completed and collected.</p> <p>To reflect this change, Footnote 15 will be updated as follows:</p>

Current ENERGY STAR Single-Family New Homes Policy Record

				<p>"Homes certified under Rev. 123 of the program requirements are permitted to use either <u>any Revision of the National HVAC Design Report between Rev. 08, 09, 10, 11, or 12</u> and Rev. 13 of the National HVAC Design Report."</p>
01215	05/01/2023	National Program Requirements (Version 3.2, Rev. 12)	Clarification	<p>Eligibility Requirements Section – Only detached, not attached, Dwellings are eligible to participate</p>
				<p>Issue: Partners have asked whether only detached Dwellings are eligible to be certified using the Single-Family New Homes (SFNH) program, or if attached Dwellings may also be certified.</p> <p>The Eligibility Requirements state that Dwellings (e.g., single-family homes and duplexes) and Townhouses may be certified using the Single-Family New Homes program. In contrast to Townhouses, which are explicitly defined as attached structures, the definition of Dwelling does not distinguish between detached and attached structures: "...any building that contains one or two Dwelling Units used, intended, or designed to be built, used, rented, leased, let or hired out to be occupied, or that are occupied for living purposes."</p> <p>Through the examples of Dwellings that are listed (single-family homes and duplexes), however, EPA intended to convey that only detached structures are eligible to be certified using the SFNH program.</p>
				<p>Resolution: To reinforce the original intent of the scope of the SFNH program, the Eligibility Requirements will be revised as follows:</p> <p>"Site-built or modular <u>detached</u> Dwellings (e.g., single-family homes and duplexes) and Townhouses are eligible to participate in the ENERGY STAR Single-Family New Homes (SFNH) program."</p>
01314	12/01/2023	National Program Requirements (Version 3.2, Rev. 12)	Clarification	<p>Eligibility Requirements Section – Link to new program document defining applicable program requirements, including the minimum Version and Revision, to which a home is eligible to be certified</p>
				<p>Issue: The Eligibility Requirements Section defines what types of homes are eligible to participate in the SFNH program. However, it does not define the applicable program requirements, including the minimum version and revision, to which a home in a particular location is eligible to be certified. This is currently defined in the Effective Date Section of the</p>

Current ENERGY STAR Single-Family New Homes Policy Record

				<p>same program document. Combining the two sections, such that all requirements related to eligibility are located in a single section, would be clearer.</p> <p>Furthermore, the current Effective Date Section lacks, or only implies, certain information that would be clearer if stated explicitly, including: a) expanding the table to include which program version(s) are applicable to homes in all locations; b) expanding the table to include, where applicable, both the national version and regional version of the program requirements to which a home is eligible to be certified; and c) a statement that the listed versions are the minimum required; therefore, homes are eligible to be certified to higher versions of the same program.</p>
				<p>Resolution: To more clearly convey all eligibility requirements, the Effective Date Section, as well as Footnote 14 and 15, will be deleted and the following sentence will be added to the Eligibility Requirements Section:</p> <p><u>“To determine the applicable SFNH program requirements, including the minimum Version and Revision, to which a home is eligible to be certified, visit www.energystar.gov/SFNHversions.”</u></p> <p>The new program document linked to in the sentence above will contain the applicable program requirements, including the minimum Version and Revision, for all locations; will include, where applicable, both the national version and regional version of the program requirements to which a home is eligible to be certified; and will state that the listed versions are the minimum required; therefore, homes are eligible to be certified to higher versions of the same program.</p>
01226	05/01/2023	National Program Requirements (Version 3.2, Rev. 12)	Clarification	<p>ENERGY STAR Certification Process Section - Pre-drywall inspection is always required</p> <p>Issue: Partners have periodically asked if there are alternative verification protocols available when a builder installs drywall before a home has had a pre-drywall inspection by the Rater.</p> <p>Step 4 of the ENERGY STAR Certification Process states that “the Rater must review all items on the National Rater checklists.. In the event that an item on a National Rater checklist cannot be inspected by the Rater, the home also cannot earn the ENERGY STAR.”</p> <p>In addition, ANSI / RESNET / ICC 301 requires visual inspection of multiple Minimum Rated Features per Normative Appendix B, including framing members and wall insulation installation, which cannot be completed if the features are concealed.</p> <p>Given these current policies, the only recourse when drywall has been installed prior to visual verification is to remove the drywall to allow the inspection of Minimum Rated Features of ANSI / RESNET / ICC 301 as well as the mandatory features of the ENERGY STAR Single-</p>

Current ENERGY STAR Single-Family New Homes Policy Record

				<p>Family New Homes program (e.g. minimum insulation levels, Grade I or II insulation, air sealing details, a complete air barrier, advanced framing details, and ductwork installed without kinks and bends). No alternative protocol has been identified that will deliver the same certainty as a pre-drywall inspection that all program requirements have been met.</p> <p>Resolution: To reinforce EPA’s current policy that a pre-drywall inspection is always required, and that drywall must be entirely removed to fully verify all Items if it has been installed prior to the inspection, Step 4 will be revised as follows:</p> <p>“Using a Rater, verify that all requirements have been met in accordance with the Mandatory Requirements for All Certified Homes and with the inspection procedures for minimum rated features in ANSI / RESNET / ICC 301, Appendix B. <u>This will require a minimum of two inspections: one at pre-drywall and the other at final.</u>”</p>
01301	12/01/2023	National Program Requirements (Version 3.2, Rev. 12)	Change	<p>ENERGY STAR Certification Process – Sunset of sampling protocols</p> <p>Issue: In July 2023, EPA held a stakeholder feedback period for a proposed sunset of sampling for the ENERGY STAR Single-Family New Homes (SFNH) program and for all townhouses.</p> <p>When first conceived, the sampling allowance was designed, in part, to broaden the reach of the ENERGY STAR program. Today, however, the use of sampling is prevalent only in a single market (Arizona), and outside of that state, more than 95% of single-family certifications in 2022 were based on individual inspections of each home.</p> <p>Because the data indicate that the national market at large has moved to individual inspections of homes, EPA believes it is appropriate to sunset the use of sampling for the ENERGY STAR Single-Family New Homes program.</p> <p>To provide greater assurance that all program requirements have been met in every certified home, EPA proposed to sunset the allowance to use sampling inspection protocols in the ENERGY STAR Single-Family New Homes program for homes permitted on or after 01/01/2025.</p> <p>Further, townhouses were proposed to not be allowed to use sampling inspection protocols, even when certified using the ENERGY STAR Multifamily New Construction (MFNC) program. However, all other building types eligible to be certified using the ENERGY STAR MFNC program would continue to be permitted to use sampling inspection protocols.</p> <p>EPA posted a response to comments and a finalized policy announcement in alignment with the proposal in the Fall of 2023.</p>

Current ENERGY STAR Single-Family New Homes Policy Record

				<p>Resolution: To reflect the sunset of the allowance to use sampling inspection protocols in the ENERGY STAR Single-Family New Homes program for homes permitted on or after 01/01/2025, the following sentence will be added to Step 4 of the ENERGY STAR Certification Process:</p> <p>“Using a Rater, verify that all requirements have been met in accordance with the Mandatory Requirements for All Certified Homes and with the inspection procedures for minimum rated features in ANSI / RESNET / ICC 301, Appendix B. <u>All items shall be verified for each certified home and sampling protocols shall not be used.</u>”</p> <p>In addition, Footnote 10, which included the allowance to use sampling, will be deleted.</p>
01283	12/01/2023	National Program Requirements (Version 3.2, Rev. 12)	Clarification	<p>ENERGY STAR Certification Process Section – Raters are to verify that items have been met within program-defined tolerances; not use discretion to discern intent of items</p>
				<p>Issue: The Certification Process Section contains statements regarding the verification of items on the program checklists that may incorrectly imply that Raters have the authority to interpret program intent, potentially leading to inconsistent implementation of the program requirements. Instead, it is the responsibility of EPA to ensure that each program requirement is sufficiently clear that all Raters can implement that policy consistently.</p> <p>Rather, the purpose of these statements was to clarify that minor deviations from a stated program requirement may be acceptable. Since the time that this language was first drafted, EPA has worked to define quantitative tolerances (e.g., Rater-measured ventilation rate must be within either ± 15 CFM or $\pm 15\%$ of design report value) to more clearly define how much variation is acceptable.</p>
				<p>Resolution: To better convey that Raters are to verify that checklist items have been met within program-defined tolerances, the following edits will be made to the Certification Process section:</p> <p>“The Rater must review all items on the National Rater checklists. Raters are expected to use their experience and discretion to verify that the overall intent of each inspection checklist item has been met <u>within program-defined tolerances</u> (i.e., identifying major defects that undermine the intent of the checklist item versus identifying minor defects that the Rater may deem acceptable).</p>

Current ENERGY STAR Single-Family New Homes Policy Record

				<p>In the event that a Rater determines that a program requirement has not been met finds an item that is inconsistent with the intent of the checklists, the home cannot earn the ENERGY STAR until the item is corrected...</p> <p>In the event that a Rater is not able to determine whether <u>a program requirement has been met</u> an item is consistent with the intent (e.g., an alternative method of meeting a checklist requirement has been proposed), then the Rater shall consult their Provider.</p> <p>If EPA believes the current program requirements are sufficiently clear to determine whether the <u>item in question</u> intent has been met, then this guidance will be provided to the partner and enforced beginning with the house in question.”</p> <p>In addition, the following minor edit will be made to Footnote 5 for consistency:</p> <p>“Certification shall only be allowed if the Rater has determined that no equivalent option is available that could meet the intent of the conflicting requirement (e.g., switching from exterior to interior slab edge insulation).”</p>
01265	12/01/2023	National Program Requirements (Version 3.2, Rev. 12)	Change	<p>Exhibit 1 – SHGC revised from 0.40 to 0.30 in CZ’s 4-8</p> <p>Issue: Exhibit 1 contains the specifications of the ENERGY STAR Reference Design Home, which generally align with National ERI Target Procedure, Version 3.2. However, for the Solar Heat Gain Coefficient (SHGC) of windows in Climate Zones 4-8, the Exhibit states “Any” whereas the National ERI Target Procedure specifies 0.40. This difference between the two documents may cause confusion.</p> <p>Furthermore, Partners have noted that the SHGC value used in the National ERI Target Procedure for these locations may be too high. The SHGC of 0.40 aligns with the maximum value allowed under the prescriptive path of the 2021 IECC in Climate Zones 4 and 5 and with the Standard Reference Design specifications in Table R405.4.2(1) for Climate Zones 4-8.</p> <p>However, windows with such a high SHGC are less common, are generally only appropriate for use in designs that are orientation-specific, and the stringency of the National v3.2 ENERGY STAR ERI Target makes it difficult to compensate when lower SHGC windows are used.</p> <p>A SHGC of 0.30 is commonly available in double silver window products that offer an appropriate balance between low U-factors and moderate SHGC in cold climates. This SHGC value was modeled in northern climates when analyzing the potential energy savings of the latest version of the ENERGY STAR Residential Windows, Doors, and Skylights specification.</p>

Current ENERGY STAR Single-Family New Homes Policy Record

				<p>Resolution: To specify a more appropriate SHGC for cold climates and stay aligned with the revisions to the National ERI Target Procedure discussed in PR #01266, the value will be revised from “Any” to 0.30 in Climate Zones 4-8.</p>
01241	12/01/2023	National Program Requirements (Version 3.2, Rev. 12)	Refinement	<p>Exhibit 2 – HVAC contractor may be required to provide documentation in Track A</p>
				<p>Issue: This Exhibit lists the mandatory requirements for all certified homes. For the HVAC Installing Contractor, it states the following:</p> <p>“None. While the HVAC contractor plays a critical role in properly installing and commissioning a system, the Rater is the party responsible for assessing its installation quality in accordance with ANSI / RESNET / ACCA / ICC 310.”</p> <p>While HVAC contractors are not required to complete any program checklists, Partners have noted that the HVAC contractor is required in some cases to provide documentation to the Rater to support their assessment, most notably regarding the refrigerant system when the Weigh-In Method of ANSI / RESNET / ACCA / ICC 310 is used. The current language may create confusion by implying that they have no role in supporting the Rater’s assessment.</p>
				<p>Resolution: To reduce potential confusion, the language will be revised as follows:</p> <p>“None. While the HVAC contractor plays a critical role in properly installing and commissioning a system, the Rater is the party responsible for assessing its installation quality in accordance with, per ANSI / RESNET / ACCA / ICC 310. However, the installing contractor may be required to provide documentation to support the Rater’s assessment (e.g., regarding the refrigerant system).”</p>
01268	12/01/2023	National Program Requirements (Version 3.2, Rev. 12)	Change	<p>Exhibit 3 – Removal of Provider discretion to define ‘Permit Date’ and addition of allowance to use Rater’s first site visit</p>
				<p>Issue: Exhibit 3 defines which Versions and Revisions are required to be used and is dependent, in part, on the permit date of homes. A footnote associated with this exhibit delineates the various ways that the permit date can be determined and includes an allowance for Providers to use their discretion when determining it. The allowance to use discretion may result in inconsistent implementation of the program requirements.</p>
				<p>Resolution: To ensure more consistent implementation of the program requirements, the allowance to use Provider discretion to define ‘permit date’ will be removed. At the same time,</p>

Current ENERGY STAR Single-Family New Homes Policy Record

				<p>an additional alternative to 'permit date' that is commonly used in the industry and results in a more conservative (i.e., later) permit date will be added, based on the date of the Rater's first inspection. Another commonly used alternative in the industry, based on the permit application date, will not be added to the program because this could result in a less conservative (i.e., earlier) permit date than the program currently allows.</p> <p>As a result, the following edits will be made to Footnote 14:</p> <p>"The Rater may define the 'permit date' as either is the date on which that the permit authorizing construction of the building was issued. Alternatively, the date of the Rater's first site visit or the date of the contract on the home is allowed to be used as the 'permit date'. The permit application date is not allowed to be used. In cases where permit or contract dates are not available, Providers have discretion to estimate permit dates based on other construction schedule factors. These assumptions should be both defensible and documented."</p>
01287	12/01/2023	National Program Requirements (Version 3.2, Rev. 12)	Change	<p>Footnote 15: Continued use of Rev. 08, 09, 10, 11 and 12 HVAC Design Report</p> <p>Issue: Due to the effort required to collect the HVAC Design Report, partners have asked whether previously collected Rev. 08, Rev. 09, Rev. 10, Rev. 11 and Rev. 12 HVAC Design Reports can continue to be used after the release of the next Revision of the program requirements, so long as no aspect of the system design changes.</p> <p>Resolution: Because the next Revision of the program checklists will not require collection of any additional information or impose any new requirements, and will maintain or increase compliance tolerances, a design documented using Rev. 08, Rev. 09, Rev. 10, Rev. 11, or Rev. 12 of the National HVAC Design Report would, by definition, meet the requirements of Rev. 13.</p> <p>Therefore, previously collected Rev. 08, Rev. 09, Rev. 10, Rev. 11, or Rev. 12 National HVAC Design Reports will be permitted to be used after the release of the next Revision of the program requirements, so long as no aspect of the building design changes. For building designs that are not identical to prior designs (e.g., due to new equipment that is rated in SEER2 instead of SEER), then a new HVAC Design Report must be completed and collected.</p> <p>To reflect this change, Footnote 15 will be updated as follows:</p> <p>"Homes certified under Rev. 123 of the program requirements are permitted to use either any Revision of the National HVAC Design Report between Rev. 08, 09, 10, 11, or 12 and Rev. 13 of the National HVAC Design Report."</p>

Current ENERGY STAR Single-Family New Homes Policy Record

01260	12/01/2023	National Rater Design Review Checklist (Version 3 / 3.1 / 3.2, Rev. 12)	Change	<p>Partnership Status Section – Verification of Energy Rating Company partnership, Rater training and Rater credential</p> <p>Issue: All National and Regional Program Requirements documents include partnership, training, and credentialing requirements for Energy Rating Companies (ERC's) and Raters, as clarified in Policy Record 01261. These requirements are not reflected on the Rater checklists, which may result in Raters inadvertently overlooking them.</p> <p>Resolution: To ensure that ERC and Rater partnership, training, and credentialing requirements are verified, two new Items will be added at the end of Section 1 - Partnership Status.</p> <p>The first new Item will read as follows:</p> <p>“Rater has verified and documented that their company has an ENERGY STAR partnership agreement using www.energystar.gov/ResPartnerDirectory.”</p> <p>A new footnote will be associated with this Item, as follows:</p> <p>“Raters are only required to document the partnership status of their company once, for the first home that the Rater certifies for them.”</p> <p>The second new Item will read as follows:</p> <p>“Rater(s) signing checklists attest that they have completed EPA-recognized training and are credentialed by a Home Certification Organization (HCO).”</p>
01327	12/01/2023	National Rater Design Review Checklist (Version 3 / 3.1 / 3.2, Rev. 12)	Change	<p>Section 3 – Allowing equivalent slab insulation assemblies using F-Factors</p> <p>Issue: This Section specifies minimum enclosure requirements that must be met. While trade-offs are generally allowed, Item 3.2 of the National Rater Field Checklist imposes a minimum insulation level and depth that must be met for slabs on grade in CZ 4-8. Partners have asked whether alternative slab insulation R-values and depths are allowed to be used if they result in an F-Factor that is equivalent to the amount specified by Item 3.2. The F-factor for a slab is an approximation of the total amount of heat transmitted through the slab expressed per unit length of slab perimeter. For example, using R-10 insulation to a depth of 12 in. for an unheated slab would result in an F-Factor of 0.58. This is equivalent to the F-Factor when R-5 insulation is installed to a depth of 24 in. for an unheated slab, which is the amount specified by Item 3.2 in Climate Zone 4 and 5.</p>

Current ENERGY STAR Single-Family New Homes Policy Record

				<p>Resolution: Given that assemblies with equivalent F-Factors result in equivalent thermal performance, EPA will add a new allowance to use an assembly that has an equivalent or more stringent F-Factor than that of the insulation required by Item 3.2 of the National Rater Field Checklist.</p> <p>Footnote 8 will be revised as follows:</p> <p>“Slab edge insulation is only required for slab-on-grade floors with a floor surface less than 12 inches below grade. Slab insulation shall extend to the top of the slab to provide a complete thermal break. If the top edge of the insulation is installed between the exterior wall and the edge of the interior slab, it shall be permitted to be cut at a 45-degree angle away from the exterior wall. <u>The following alternatives apply:</u></p> <p>c. <u>Slab assemblies with an F-Factor equivalent to that of the insulation required in Item 3.2 of the National Rater Field Checklist may be used. F-Factors shall be determined using Table A6.3.1-1 from ASHRAE 90.1-2022 Appendix A. See www.energstar.gov/F-Factor for more details.</u></p> <p>d. Alternatively, The thermal break is permitted to be created using \geq R-3 rigid insulation on top the slab. In such cases, up to 10% of the slab surface is permitted to not be insulated (e.g., for sleepers, for sill plates). Insulation installed on top of slab shall be covered by a durable floor surface (e.g., hardwood, tile, carpet).”</p>
01255	12/01/2023	National Rater Design Review Checklist (Version 3 / 3.1 / 3.2, Rev, 12)	Refinement	<p>Item 3.1 - Item 3.4 of National Rater Field Checklist Must Be Met Regardless of UA Tradeoffs</p> <p>Issue: Item 3.1 of the National Rater Design Review Checklist specifies the total building thermal envelope UA that must be met. Its associated Footnote 7 states, in part, that:</p> <p>“The performance of all components (i.e., ceilings, walls, floors, slabs, and fenestration) can be traded off using the UA approach. Note that Items 3.1 through 3.3 of the National Rater Field Checklist shall be met regardless of the UA tradeoffs calculated.”</p> <p>Because Item 3.4 of the National Rater Field Checklist, Version 3 / 3.1 / 3.2 (Rev. 12), is not referenced in this Footnote, partners have asked whether it also must be met regardless of UA tradeoffs. Item 3.4 specifies reduced thermal bridging requirements for above-grade walls separating conditioned from unconditioned space.</p> <p>While the Footnote may create ambiguity, all Items on the National Rater Field Checklist are mandatory. The Footnote is solely intended to call attention to the designer and Rater that there are additional thermal enclosure requirements in addition to meeting the UA limit.</p>

Current ENERGY STAR Single-Family New Homes Policy Record

				<p>Resolution: To more clearly convey the intent that Item 3.4 of the National Rater Field Checklist must be met regardless of UA tradeoffs, Footnote 7 of National Rater Design Review Checklist will be revised as follows:</p> <p>“The performance of all components (i.e., ceilings, walls, floors, slabs, and fenestration) can be traded off using the UA approach. Note that Items 3.1 through 3.4-3.3 of the National Rater Field Checklist shall be met regardless of the UA tradeoffs calculated.”</p>
01247	12/01/2023	National Rater Design Review Checklist (Version 3 / 3.1 / 3.2, Rev. 12)	Change	<p>Item 3.1.2 – Elimination of alternative compliance option allowing less rigorous thermal enclosure than the 2009 IECC</p>
				<p>Issue: This Item provides an alternative compliance option for meeting the building thermal envelope requirements for all Versions except National Version 3.2. It permits the specified total building thermal envelope UA to achieve $\leq 133\%$ of the total UA resulting from the U-factors in the 2009 IECC (i.e., less insulation than the 2009 IECC) in exchange for lower infiltration rates.</p> <p>This option was first developed for National Version 3.0, which has since been sunset. The option was carried over to National Version 3.1, though it is less relevant in that context because the Reference Design enclosure in National Version 3.1 is aligned with the more rigorous 2012 IECC. The option was not extended to National Version 3.2, which includes a more rigorous thermal backstop aligned with the 2021 IECC.</p>
				<p>Resolution: Given these developments, EPA believes that it is time to sunset the alternative compliance option in Item 3.1.2. This will have the added benefit of greatly simplifying Item 3.1.</p> <p>As a result, Item 3.1.1 and 3.1.2 will be deleted and Item 3.1 will be rewritten as follows to preserve the remaining compliance option:</p> <p>“3.1 Specified total building thermal envelope UA achieves $\leq 100\%$ of the total UA resulting from the U-factors in 2009 IECC Table 402.1.3 or, for National v3.2, 2021 IECC Table 402.1.2. See exception in Fn. 7.”</p>
01253	12/01/2023	National Rater Design Review Checklist (Version 3 / 3.1 / 3.2, Rev. 12)	Refinement	<p>Section 4b – Relocation of Footnote allowing prior Revisions of HVAC Design Report</p>
				<p>Issue: All National and Regional Program requirements contain the following Footnote, which allows partners to use the National HVAC Design Report from prior Revisions:</p>

Current ENERGY STAR Single-Family New Homes Policy Record

				<p>“Homes certified under Rev. 12 of the program requirements are permitted to use either Rev. 08, 09, 10, 11, or 12 of the National HVAC Design Report.”</p> <p>There have been limited changes to that document across these Revisions. Therefore, the intent of this allowance is to reduce the burden on HVAC Designers and Raters by not requiring them to produce and collect new editions of the report, which would be substantially the same as the documentation that they already have.</p> <p>The current placement of the allowance is not optimal given that partners interact with the National Rater Design Review Checklist more often than the program requirements documents.</p>
				<p>Resolution: To increase the visibility and usage of the allowance by partners, Footnote 15 of the National Rater Design Review Checklist will be updated by adding this allowance at the end. The existing footnote will be removed from all National and Regional Program requirements documents.</p>
01248	12/01/2023	National Rater Field Checklist (Version 3 / 3.1 / 3.2, Rev. 12)	Clarification	<p>Items 1.2 and 1.3 – Builder-verified allowance limited to 10% of insulated assemblies</p> <p>Issue: This Checklist allows up to eight items in Sections 1-4 to be verified by the builder, at the Rater’s discretion. For Items 1.2 and 1.3, which generally require that insulation exceed specified levels and achieve Grade I, partners have asked whether builders are permitted to verify these Items for the entire home.</p> <p>EPA did not intend to allow builders to verify the entirety of these Items, but rather specific areas of the thermal enclosure that may be difficult for the Rater to visually inspect during their site visits. For example, if insulation is installed behind a rigid air barrier prior to the installation of a bathtub, such that the insulation will be concealed prior to the Rater’s visit, or if an area of wall insulation requires re-work to achieve Grade I, the Rater may elect to have the builder verify the R-value and/or installation quality (e.g., by inspecting, photographing, and sending documentation to the Rater).</p> <p>Resolution: To clarify this intent, a qualifier stating “Up to 10%” will be added next to the builder-verified checkboxes for these two Items. In addition, Footnote 1 will be modified, as follows:</p> <p>“At the discretion of the Rater, the builder may verify up to eight items in Sections 1-4 of this Checklist. When this allowance is used for Item 1.2 or 1.3, a maximum of 10% of the total</p>

Current ENERGY STAR Single-Family New Homes Policy Record

				<p><u>surface area of the non-adiabatic insulated assemblies are permitted to be builder-verified; the remainder must be verified by the Rater. When exercised, the builder's responsibility will be formally acknowledged by the builder signing off on the checklist for the item(s) that they verified. However, if a quality assurance review indicates that Items have not been successfully completed, the Rater will be responsible for facilitating corrective action."</u></p>
00111	12/01/2023	National Rater Field Checklist (Version 3 / 3.1 / 3.2, Rev. 12)	Clarification	<p>Item 1.2, 1.3, and 3.4.1 – Reflective insulation can be used to satisfy R-value and insulation grade requirements, but is not considered continuous rigid insulation</p> <p>Issue: Partners have asked for permission to use reflective insulation to fulfill Items 1.2, 1.3, and 3.4.1. These items specify minimum required insulation levels, insulation installation grades, and reduced thermal bridging requirements, respectively.</p> <p>Policy Record Entry 00024 did not allow this practice because the R-values for reflective insulation products rely on air spaces that are not integral to the products and because the ICC Evaluation Service typically classifies such products as weather barriers rather than as insulation products.</p> <p>In response to this guidance, partners have asked EPA to reevaluate the acceptability of reflective insulation products on the grounds that they reduce heat transfer when installed properly, they are treated as insulation products under the Federal Trade Commission 16 CFR Part 460 – Labeling and Advertising of Home Insulation, and there are applicable standards that govern their specification and installation (ASTM C727 and ASTM C1224).</p> <p>Resolution: Since this issue was raised, ANSI/RESNET/ICC 301-2019 has been released, which includes guidance on assessing the R-value and installation quality of reflective insulation in Normative Appendix A, Inspection Procedures for Insulation Grading and Assessment. Specifically, Section A-2.3 provides installation requirements for reflective or radiant products that are assigned an R-value or installation grade.</p> <p>In addition, Policy Record Entry 00965 has clarified that reflective insulation is required to achieve Grade I.</p> <p>With the guidance provided in ANSI/RESNET/ICC 301-2019 and Policy Record Entry 00965, the R-value and insulation grade of reflective insulation can now be assessed and, therefore, used to satisfy Items 1.2 and 1.3. However, it must be emphasized that reflective airspaces cannot claim R-values “except where the cladding and perimeter of the airspace creates a totally enclosed and unventilated cavity”.</p> <p>In contrast, typical reflective insulation products are not rigid and therefore would not satisfy the requirement for reduced thermal bridging in Item 3.4.1.</p>

Current ENERGY STAR Single-Family New Homes Policy Record

01330	12/01/2023	National Rater Field Checklist (Version 3 / 3.1 / 3.2, Rev. 12)	Change	<p>Item 3.2 – Exemption from slab insulation at wall separating conditioned space from garage for monolithic slab that extends into the garage</p> <p>Issue: EPA has provided exemptions from the requirement in Climate Zone 4 and higher to insulate 100% of the edge of slabs-on-grade for various specific details that have presented challenges. A Partner has recently asked for an exemption for a new detail.</p> <p>This Item generally requires that where an insulated wall separates an unconditioned space from the conditioned space of the house, slab insulation be installed at this interface to provide a thermal break between the conditioned and unconditioned slab.</p> <p>The detail in question involves a monolithic slab that extends from conditioned space into an adjacent garage, where a thickened slab is provided under the wall that separates the two spaces to provide structural integrity at the intersection. Among other reasons, monolithic slabs can be used to overcome soil-bearing conditions that are compromised and not able to support a stem wall with floating slab.</p> <p>Because the monolithic slab needs to extend to the outer garage wall, the partner has stated that this precludes the installation of insulation in the slab between the house and the garage.</p> <p>Resolution: After consulting with subject matter experts, EPA agrees that no commonplace details exist to insulate a monolithic slab at the intersection between the conditioned and unconditioned space. However, it recommends that alternative slab designs that can accommodate a thermal break be considered.</p> <p>As a result, a new exemption will be added to the Slab Edge Insulation Exemptions and Alternatives document as follows, where the figures referenced below can be found:</p> <p>“For the scenario illustrated in Figure 2, where a monolithic slab extends from conditioned space to an adjacent garage, slab insulation is not required to be provided at this boundary. This exemption is provided because of the challenge of incorporating a thermal break at this location when there is a need to maintain the structural continuity of the slab into the garage (e.g., to support a wall at the exterior of the garage).</p> <p>EPA recommends, but does not require, that alternative slab designs that can accommodate a thermal break be considered. For example, in Figure 3 the soil-bearing conditions are not compromised and the site can support a stem wall with a floating slab.”</p>
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Current ENERGY STAR Single-Family New Homes Policy Record

01259	12/01/2023	National Rater Field Checklist (Version 3 / 3.1 / 3.2, Rev. 12)	Change	<p>Item 3.2 – Allowance of 45-degree slab insulation cut between exterior wall and exterior slab</p> <p>Issue: Current policy permits that the top edge of insulation installed between the exterior wall and the edge of the interior slab can be cut at a 45-degree angle away from the wall.</p> <p>Partners have requested that this policy be extended to allow slab edge insulation to be cut at a 45-degree angle away from the wall when the insulation is installed between the exterior wall and an exterior slab (e.g., a patio slab).</p> <p>Resolution: EPA has determined that allowing this practice between the exterior wall and an exterior slab will result in similar performance to the current allowance. Therefore, this detail should be available for partners to use, if desired.</p> <p>To reflect this change, the fourth sentence in Footnote 15, associated with Item 3.2, will be updated as follows:</p> <p>“If the top edge of the insulation is installed between the exterior wall and the edge of the an interior, or exterior, slab, it shall be permitted to be cut at a 45-degree angle away from the exterior wall.”</p>
01326	12/01/2023	National Rater Field Checklist (Version 3 / 3.1 / 3.2, Rev. 12)	Change	<p>Item 3.2 – Allowing equivalent slab insulation assemblies using F-Factors</p> <p>Issue: This Item specifies a minimum insulation level and depth that must be met for slabs on grade in CZ 4-8. Partners have asked whether alternative R-values and depths are allowed to be used if they result in an F-Factor that is equivalent to the amount specified by Item 3.2. The F-factor for a slab is an approximation of the total amount of heat transmitted through the slab expressed per unit length of slab perimeter. For example, using R-10 insulation to a depth of 12 in. for an unheated slab would result in an F-Factor of 0.58. This is equivalent to the F-Factor when R-5 insulation is installed to a depth of 24 in. for an unheated slab, which is the amount specified by Item 3.2 in Climate Zone 4 and 5.</p> <p>Resolution: Given that assemblies with equivalent F-Factors result in equivalent thermal performance, EPA will add a new allowance to use an assembly that has an equivalent or more stringent F-Factor than that of the insulation required in by Item 3.2.</p> <p>Footnote 15 will be revised as follows:</p>

Current ENERGY STAR Single-Family New Homes Policy Record

				<p>“Slab edge insulation is only required for slab-on-grade floors with a floor surface less than 12 inches below grade. Slab insulation shall extend to the top of the slab to provide a complete thermal break. If the top edge of the insulation is installed between the exterior wall and the edge of the interior slab, it shall be permitted to be cut at a 45-degree angle away from the exterior wall. <u>The following alternatives apply:</u></p> <p>a. <u>Slab assemblies with an F-Factor equivalent to that of the insulation required in Item 3.2 may be used. F-Factors shall be determined using Table A6.3.1-1 from ASHRAE 90.1-2022 Appendix A. See www.energstar.gov/F-Factor for more details.</u></p> <p>b. Alternatively, †The thermal break is permitted to be created using ≥ R-3 rigid insulation on top the slab. In such cases, up to 10% of the slab surface is permitted to not be insulated (e.g., for sleepers, for sill plates). Insulation installed on top of slab shall be covered by a durable floor surface (e.g., hardwood, tile, carpet).”</p>
01213	05/01/2023	National Rater Field Checklist (Version 3 / 3.1 / 3.2, Rev. 12)	Clarification	<p>Multiple Items – 2021 IECC to be used for CZ designations for National v3.2; 2009 IECC for all other Versions</p>
				<p>Issue: A partner has asked which edition of the IECC should be utilized when completing the Checklist.</p> <p>For example, Section 2 requires that a complete air barrier be provided that is aligned at the interior vertical surface of wall insulation in Climate Zones 4-8. Because some counties have shifted to a different Climate Zone in the 2021 IECC compared to prior editions, the IECC edition specified will impact the requirements of the program.</p>
				<p>Resolution: A new Footnote will be added and referenced by all Items that include a requirement tied to Climate Zone designations, as follows:</p> <p>“For all Versions except National v3.2, the 2009 IECC Climate Zone designations are applicable, as defined and illustrated in Section R301 of the code. For National Version 3.2, the 2021 IECC Climate Zone designations are applicable, as defined and illustrated in Section R301 of the code. Note that some locations have shifted to a different Climate Zone in the 2021 IECC compared to prior editions.”</p>
01329	12/01/2023	National Rater Field Checklist (Version 3 / 3.1 / 3.2, Rev. 12)	Clarification	<p>Item 6.2 – Re-testing bedroom pressures after HVAC airflow changes recommended, but not required</p>
				<p>Issue: A partner has asked whether bedroom pressure balancing limits must be re-verified if the airflow of the HVAC system blower fan changes. The most obvious example is if the HVAC</p>

Current ENERGY STAR Single-Family New Homes Policy Record

				<p>contractor changes the HVAC system fan-speed setting during commissioning, or re-commissioning after the Rater has completed HVAC grading.</p> <p>To re-verify that the bedroom pressure-balancing limits have been met, the Rater would typically have to return to the site in a short period of time. Furthermore, the change in total airflow will be distributed among all rooms, meaning that the change in room pressure for any one bedroom will likely be marginal.</p>
				<p>Resolution: Because of the logistical challenges of returning to the site and the likelihood that the changes would be marginal, EPA recommends, but does not require, that bedroom pressure limits be re-verified if blower fan airflow changes after initial assessment.</p>
01256	12/01/2023	National Rater Field Checklist (Version 3 / 3.1 / 3.2, Rev. 12)	Clarification	<p>Item 7.1 – How to verify when the designer has provided multiple acceptable combinations of a design ventilation airflow rate and run-time</p> <p>Issue: The National HVAC Design Report is currently structured to accommodate a single combination of a design ventilation airflow rate and run-time. Raters are required to verify that the Rater-measured ventilation rate is within the program-specified tolerance relative to the design report value.</p> <p>Partners have noted that some HVAC designers prefer to specify a range of ventilation run-time and airflow combinations that would be acceptable, rather than a single combination. They have asked whether that is acceptable and how the Rater should verify that the ventilation airflow is within the program-specified tolerance in such cases.</p> <p>Resolution: As addressed in Policy Record #01257, designers are permitted to provide multiple combinations of a design ventilation airflow rate, run-time per cycle, and cycle time, all of which are acceptable to the designer.</p> <p>When a single combination of a design ventilation airflow rate, run-time per cycle, and cycle time are documented on the National HVAC Design Report, the Rater is not required to verify run-time of the ventilation system, because the design ventilation airflow rate is known.</p> <p>However, when multiple combinations are provided, the Rater is required to first assess the run-time setting of the installed system and use that to determine the corresponding design ventilation rate. The Rater-measured ventilation rate must fall within the program-specified tolerance relative to that design ventilation rate.</p> <p>To reflect this Footnote 48 will be updated as follows:</p>

Current ENERGY STAR Single-Family New Homes Policy Record

				<p>“The Dwelling Unit Mechanical Ventilation System air flows and local exhaust air flows shall be determined and documented by a Rater using ANSI / RESNET / ICC 380 including all Addenda and Normative Appendices, with new versions and Addenda implemented according to the schedule defined by the HCO that the home is being certified under. <u>Designers are permitted to provide multiple combinations of a design ventilation airflow rate, run-time per cycle, and cycle time. When multiple combinations are provided, the Rater shall first assess the run-time setting of the installed system and use that to determine the corresponding design ventilation rate. The Rater-measured ventilation rate must fall within the program-specified tolerance relative to that design ventilation rate.</u>”</p>
01212	05/01/2023	National Rater Field Checklist (Version 3 / 3.1 / 3.2, Rev. 12)	Clarification	<p>Item 7.2 – Override control is intended to be dedicated to that function</p>
				<p>Issue: This Item requires that a “readily-accessible ventilation override control [be] installed and also labeled if its function is not obvious (e.g., a label is required for a toggle wall switch, but not for a switch that’s on the ventilation equipment).”</p> <p>A partner has asked whether the program’s intent is for the override control to be dedicated to that function. For example, would it be permissible for a single toggle wall switch to both act as the override for a dwelling unit mechanical ventilation system and to power a general lighting fixture. In such a scenario, the light would be turned on when the dwelling unit mechanical ventilation system is operating and turned off when the system is not operating.</p>
				<p>Resolution: The intent of this Item is for the override control to be dedicated to the override function. In the scenario described above, one toggle wall switch would be needed to operate the general lighting fixture and a second toggle wall switch would be needed to override the dwelling unit mechanical ventilation system. Furthermore, the toggle wall switch used as the override would also need to be labeled because its function is not obvious.</p>
01264	12/01/2023	National Rater Field Checklist (Version 3 / 3.1 / 3.2, Rev. 12)	Clarification	<p>Item 7.4 – Fans located above ceiling drywall are outside habitable space</p>
				<p>Issue: A Partner has asked whether a continuous exhaust in-line fan located above the ceiling drywall would be considered to be outside habitable space and, therefore, eligible for the exemption from the Item’s some requirements found in Footnote 52.</p> <p>ASHRAE 62.2 defines “habitable space” as “building space intended for continual human occupancy; such space generally includes areas used for living, sleeping, dining, and cooking but does not generally include bathrooms, toilets, hallways, storage areas, closets, or utility rooms.”</p>

Current ENERGY STAR Single-Family New Homes Policy Record

				<p>This definition does not clearly indicate whether a fan located above the ceiling drywall of one of these spaces (e.g., above a living room) is considered habitable space. Therefore, a clarification is needed on this issue.</p>
				<p>Resolution: EPA has determined that a fan located above the ceiling drywall will not be considered to be located in habitable space because the space above the drywall is not “intended for continual human occupancy.” Therefore, a remote-mounted fan located \geq 4ft from the intake grill and located above the ceiling drywall is exempt from the same requirement for Item 7.4.</p>
01322	12/01/2023	National Rater Field Checklist (Version 3 / 3.1 / 3.2, Rev. 12)	Change	<p>Item 7.7.2 – Minimum separation distance reduced between air inlets and outlets of exhaust ventilation systems</p> <p>Issue: Partners have indicated challenges in locating dwelling unit outdoor air inlets on exterior walls of Townhouses, as well as multifamily dwelling units certified using the Multifamily New Construction program, that are at least 10 ft from the outlets of dwelling unit exhaust systems given the proximity to adjacent dwelling units and limited exterior wall area to locate intakes and outlets. A reduced separation distance would reduce the barrier to providing multifamily dwelling units and Townhouses with a dedicated supply of outdoor air.</p> <p>Resolution: EPA agrees that reducing the minimum required separation distance between air inlets and the outlets of both exhaust dwelling unit mechanical ventilation systems and local mechanical exhaust systems would increase the ability of project teams to design systems that provide outdoor air directly to multifamily dwelling units and Townhouses. For simplicity, the same allowance will be extended to other dwelling types eligible to participate in the Single-Family New Homes program. Note that the minimum required separation distance between air inlets and other known sources of contamination (e.g., combustion appliance vent terminations, vehicles) will remain the same.</p> <p>In considering this revision, it was also observed that the related footnotes should be re-organized to improve clarity.</p> <p>It was also observed that the current allowance for “balanced ventilation systems” to use smaller spacing requirements if instructed by the manufacturer should be more specific to balanced systems from one manufacturer, such as ERV’s or HRV’s, and should not be more broadly available to separate systems that may be ‘balanced’, but won’t have a single manufacturer’s instructions to reference.</p> <p>To reflect this change, Footnote 55 and 56 will be revised as follows:</p>

Current ENERGY STAR Single-Family New Homes Policy Record

				<p>55. Without proper maintenance, ventilation air inlet screens often become filled with debris. Therefore, EPA recommends, but does not require, that these ventilation air inlets be located so as to facilitate access and regular service by the occupant. Ventilation air inlets that are only visible via rooftop access are exempted from Item 7.7 and the Rater shall mark "N/A". The outlet and inlet of balanced ventilation systems shall meet these spacing requirements unless manufacturer instructions indicate that a smaller distance may be used. However, if this occurs the manufacturer's instructions shall be collected for documentation purposes.</p> <p>56. Without proper maintenance, ventilation air inlet screens often become filled with debris. Therefore, EPA recommends, but does not require, that these ventilation air inlets be located so as to facilitate access and regular service by the occupant. Two alternatives to the required 10 ft. distance are provided: 1) inlets providing outdoor air to a dwelling unit are permitted to be ≥ 5 ft. of stretched-string distance from outlets of both exhaust dwelling unit mechanical ventilation systems and local mechanical exhaust systems, and 2) the outlet and inlet of ERV's and HRV's may use a smaller distance if allowed by the manufacturer of the system. If the second alternative is used, the manufacturer's instructions shall be collected for documentation purposes.</p>
01234	05/01/2023	National Rater Field Checklist (Version 3 / 3.1 / 3.2, Rev. 12)	Clarification	<p>Signature Block - Pre-drywall inspection is always required; reinforce purpose of pre-drywall and final inspection</p> <p>Issue: Partners have periodically asked if there are alternative verification protocols available when a builder installs drywall before a home has had a pre-drywall inspection by the Rater.</p> <p>Step 4 of the ENERGY STAR Certification Process states that "the Rater must review all items on the National Rater checklists.. In the event that an item on a National Rater checklist cannot be inspected by the Rater, the home also cannot earn the ENERGY STAR."</p> <p>In addition, ANSI / RESNET / ICC 301 requires visual inspection of multiple Minimum Rated Features per Normative Appendix B, including framing members and wall insulation installation, which cannot be completed if the features are concealed.</p> <p>Given these current policies, the only recourse when drywall has been installed prior to visual verification is to remove the drywall to allow the inspection of Minimum Rated Features of ANSI / RESNET / ICC 301 as well as the mandatory features of the ENERGY STAR Single-Family New Homes program (e.g. minimum insulation levels, Grade I or II insulation, air sealing details, a complete air barrier, advanced framing details, and ductwork installed without kinks and bends). No alternative protocol has been identified that will deliver the same certainty as a pre-drywall inspection that all program requirements have been met.</p>

Current ENERGY STAR Single-Family New Homes Policy Record

				<p>Resolution: To reinforce EPA's current policy that a pre-drywall inspection is always required, and that drywall must be entirely removed to fully verify all Items if it has been installed prior to the inspection, a new Footnote will be added after the "Rater Pre-Drywall Inspection Date" field, as follows:</p> <p><u>"Any Item that will be concealed by drywall (e.g., wall insulation) must be verified during the pre-drywall inspection.</u></p> <p><u>If drywall is installed prior to the inspection, then it must be entirely removed to fully verify all Items. It is not sufficient to remove only portions of drywall to inspect a subset of areas. Furthermore, it is not acceptable to complete a Sampled Rating on a home that has missed the pre-drywall inspection. Additional information is available in the Technical Bulletin: Pre-Drywall Inspection Is Always Required."</u></p> <p>While not directly related to the pre-drywall clarification, a new Footnote will also be added after the "Rater Final Inspection Date" field to clarify the purpose of that inspection, as follows:</p> <p><u>"Some Items can typically only be verified at a later stage of construction than when the pre-drywall inspection occurs (e.g., bath fan airflow). Any Item that has not been verified during the pre-drywall inspection must be verified prior to or during the final inspection."</u></p>
01307	12/01/2023	National Rater Field Checklist (Version 3 / 3.1 / 3.2, Rev. 12)	Change	<p>Footnote 4 – Elimination of alternative compliance option allowing less rigorous thermal enclosure than the 2009 IECC</p> <p>Issue: This Footnote references an alternative compliance option for meeting the building thermal envelope requirements for all Versions except National Version 3.2 (Item 3.1.2 of the National Rater Design Review Checklist). It permits the specified total building thermal envelope UA to achieve ≤ 133% of the total UA resulting from the U-factors in the 2009 IECC (i.e., less insulation than the 2009 IECC) in exchange for lower infiltration rates.</p> <p>This option was first developed for National Version 3.0, which has since been sunset. The option was carried over to National Version 3.1, though it is less relevant in that context because the Reference Design enclosure in National Version 3.1 is aligned with the more rigorous 2012 IECC. The option was not extended to National Version 3.2, which includes a more rigorous thermal backstop aligned with the 2021 IECC.</p> <p>Resolution: Given these developments, EPA believes that it is time to sunset the alternative compliance option in Item 3.1.2 of the Rater Design Review Checklist. This will have the added benefit of greatly simplifying Item 3.1.</p>

Current ENERGY STAR Single-Family New Homes Policy Record

				As a result, Item 3.1.2 in the Rater Design Review Checklist will be deleted and therefore Footnote 4 in this document will be deleted.
01251	12/01/2023	National HVAC Design Report (Version 3 / 3.1 / 3.2, Rev. 12)	Refinement	HVAC Designer Responsibilities Section – Relocation of Footnote allowing prior Revisions of HVAC Design Report
				<p>Issue: All National and Regional Program requirements contain the following Footnote, which allows partners to use the National HVAC Design Report from prior Revisions:</p> <p>“Homes certified under Rev. 12 of the program requirements are permitted to use either Rev. 08, 09, 10, 11, or 12 of the National HVAC Design Report.”</p> <p>There have been limited changes to that document across these Revisions. Therefore, the intent of this allowance is to reduce the burden on HVAC Designers and Raters by not requiring them to produce and collect new editions of the report, which would be substantially the same as the documentation that they already have.</p> <p>The current placement of the allowance is not optimal given that partners interact with the National HVAC Design Report more often than the program requirements documents.</p>
				<p>Resolution: To increase the visibility and usage of the allowance by partners, Footnote 2 of the National HVAC Design Report will be updated by adding this allowance at the end. The existing footnote will be removed from all National and Regional Program requirements documents.</p>
01257	12/01/2023	National HVAC Design Report (Version 3 / 3.1 / 3.2, Rev. 12)	Clarification	Section 2 – Documenting multiple acceptable combinations of a design ventilation airflow rate and run-time is allowed
				<p>Issue: The National HVAC Design Report is currently structured to accommodate a single combination of a design ventilation airflow rate and run-time. Partners have noted that some HVAC designers prefer to specify a range of ventilation run-time and airflow combinations that would be acceptable, rather than a single combination, and have asked whether that is acceptable.</p>
				<p>Resolution: Footnote 6 already allows designers to provide supplemental documentation as needed to document the system design. Therefore, designers are permitted to provide multiple</p>

Current ENERGY STAR Single-Family New Homes Policy Record

				<p>combinations of a design ventilation airflow rate, run-time per cycle, and cycle time, all of which are acceptable to the designer.</p> <p>It is worth noting that when multiple combinations are provided, the Rater will be required to first assess the run-time setting of the installed system and use that to determine the corresponding design ventilation rate. The Rater-measured ventilation rate then must fall within the program-specified tolerance relative to that design ventilation rate. In contrast, when a single combination of a design ventilation airflow rate, run-time per cycle, and cycle time are documented on the National HVAC Design Report, the Rater is not required to verify run-time of the ventilation system, because the design ventilation airflow rate is known.</p> <p>To reflect this, Footnote 6 of the National HVAC Design Report will be updated as follows:</p> <p><u>“The system shall have at least one supply or exhaust fan with associated ducts and controls. Local exhaust fans are allowed to be part of a Dwelling Unit Mechanical Ventilation System. Designers may provide supplemental documentation as needed to document the system design. For example, for Item 2.3, designers are permitted to provide multiple combinations of a design ventilation airflow rate, run-time per cycle, and cycle time. When multiple combinations are provided, the Rater will be required to first assess the run-time setting of the installed system and use that to determine the corresponding design ventilation rate. The Rater-measured ventilation rate then must fall within the program-specified tolerance relative to that design ventilation rate.”</u></p>
01323	12/01/2023	National HVAC Design Report (Version 3 / 3.1 / 3.2, Rev. 12)	Change	<p>Item 2.13 – Minimum separation distances reduced between air inlets and outlets of exhaust ventilation systems</p> <p>Issue: HVAC designers have indicated challenges in locating dwelling unit outdoor air inlets on exterior walls of Townhouses, as well as multifamily dwelling units certified using the Multifamily New Construction program, that are at least 10 ft from the outlets of dwelling unit exhaust systems given the proximity to adjacent dwelling units and limited exterior wall area to locate intakes and outlets. A reduced separation distance would reduce the barrier to providing multifamily dwelling units and Townhouses with a dedicated supply of outdoor air.</p> <p>Resolution: EPA agrees that reducing the minimum required separation distance between air inlets and the outlets of both exhaust dwelling unit mechanical ventilation systems and local mechanical exhaust systems would increase the ability of project teams to design systems that provide outdoor air directly to multifamily dwelling units and Townhouses. For simplicity, the same allowance will be extended to other dwelling types eligible to participate in the Single-Family New Homes program. Note that the minimum required separation distance between air</p>

Current ENERGY STAR Single-Family New Homes Policy Record

				<p>inlets and other known sources of contamination (e.g., combustion appliance vent terminations, vehicles) will remain the same.</p> <p>To reflect this change, a footnote will be added to Item 2.13 as follows:</p> <p><u>Two alternatives to the required 10 ft. distance are provided: 1) inlets providing outdoor air to a dwelling unit are permitted to be \geq 5 ft. of stretched-string distance from outlets of both exhaust dwelling-unit mechanical ventilation systems and local mechanical exhaust systems, and 2) the outlet and inlet of ERV's and HRV's may use a smaller distance if allowed by the manufacturer of the system. If the second alternative is used, the manufacturer's instructions shall be collected for documentation purposes.</u></p>
01263	12/01/2023	National HVAC Design Report (Version 3 / 3.1 / 3.2, Rev. 12)	Clarification	Item 4.5 – AHRI Reference # to encompass indoor and outdoor components of AC / HP
				<p>Issue: Partners have asked for clarification about the requirement to report the AHRI Reference # in Item 4.5. Specifically, they have asked whether the number provided is intended to represent the rating of the combined performance of both the indoor and outdoor components of the system (e.g., the evaporator, condenser, and blower fan) or if the rating of just an individual component (e.g., the condenser) would be sufficient.</p> <p>The AHRI # is serving two purposes: 1) To document the rated efficiency being used in the energy rating; 2) To demonstrate that the indoor and outdoor components of the air conditioner or heat pump are designed to be used together.</p> <p>This goal is conveyed in Footnote 27 of the National HVAC Design Report, specifically regarding alternative documentation that must be provided when an AHRI # is not present: “If an AHRI Reference # is not available, OEM-provided documentation shall be attached with the rated efficiency of the specific combination of indoor & outdoor components of the air conditioner or heat pump, along with confirmation that the components are designed to be used together.”</p> <p>This goal is stated even more clearly in the ANSI / RESNET / ACCA 310 HVAC Design Report, Footnote 31: “If an AHRI Reference Number is not available, OEM-provided documentation shall be collected with the rated efficiency of the equipment. If the equipment contains multiple components, the rated efficiency shall reflect the specific combination of indoor and outdoor components, along with confirmation from the OEM that the two components are designed to be used together.”</p> <p>Item 4.5 does not explicitly state what components the AHRI Reference Number needs to encompass, just what must be provided in the alternative documentation. However, the intent</p>

Current ENERGY STAR Single-Family New Homes Policy Record

				<p>is for the AHRI # to also reflect the specific combination of indoor and outdoor components, which also conveys that the two components are designed to be used together.</p> <p>Resolution: To clarify the intent that the AHRI # reflect the specific combination of indoor and outdoor components used by the equipment, the following sentence will be added to the beginning of Footnote 27:</p> <p><u>“If the equipment contains multiple components, the AHRI Reference # shall represent the rated efficiency of the specific combination of indoor and outdoor components. EPA recommends, but does not require, that the rating also encompass the furnace when such a rating is available.”</u></p>
01285	12/01/2023	National HVAC Design Report (Version 3 / 3.1 / 3.2, Rev. 12)	Clarification	<p>Items 4.6 and 4.18 – Flexibility added to report both the rated efficiency value and metric</p> <p>Issue: Item 4.6 of the SFNH National HVAC Design Report, Version 3 / 3.1 / 3.2 (Rev. 12) requires the designer to enter the “AHRI listed efficiency” in units of SEER or EER; the heating efficiency of an air-source heat pump in units of HSPF; and the heating efficiency of a ground-source heat pump in units of COP.</p> <p>Since the development of the design report, new rating metrics have become available – SEER2, EER2, and HSPF2. Partners have asked how equipment rated using these new metrics should be entered into the design report. In addition, they have asked for guidance on what to report when ratings are available using both AHRI 210/240-2017 (e.g., SEER) and -2023 (SEER2).</p> <p>Resolution: Item 4.6 of the SFNH National HVAC Design Report will be revised as follows, to allow the designer to enter both the rated efficiency value and the associated metric.</p> <p><u>“4.6 AHRI listed Rated cooling efficiency ____ EER / SEER Air-source heat pump Rated heating efficiency: ____ HSPF Ground-source heat pump: ____ COP</u></p> <p>A new footnote will be associated with “Rated cooling efficiency” as follows:</p> <p>“For example, if the metric for the rated efficiency is SEER, SEER2, EER, or EER2, then its SEER, SEER2, EER, or EER2 rating shall be reported. If both SEER and EER (or SEER2 and EER2) are available, then both values shall be reported. When ratings are available using both AHRI 210/240-2017 (e.g., SEER) and -2023 (SEER2), then only the former (e.g., SEER) need be reported.”</p> <p>And a new footnote will be associated with “Rated heating efficiency” as follows:</p>

Current ENERGY STAR Single-Family New Homes Policy Record

				<p>“For example, if the metric for the rated efficiency is HSPF, HSPF2, or COP, then its HSPF, HSPF2, or COP rating shall be reported. When ratings are available using both AHRI 210/240-2017 (e.g., HSPF) and -2023 (HSPF2), then only the former (e.g., HSPF) need be reported.”</p> <p>For consistency in wording, Item 4.18, which requires the designer to enter furnace efficiency, will also be revised as follows:</p> <p>“Listed <u>Rated heating</u> efficiency: ____ AFUE“</p> <p>Because AFUE is the only applicable rating metric for furnaces, this metric will remain on the checklist.</p>
01324	12/01/2023	National HVAC Design Supplement to Std. 310 for Dwellings and Units (All Versions, Rev. 12)	Change	<p>Item 2.11 – Minimum separation distances reduced between air inlets and outlets of exhaust ventilation systems</p>
				<p>Issue: HVAC designers have indicated challenges in locating dwelling unit outdoor air inlets on exterior walls of Townhouses, as well as multifamily dwelling units certified using the Multifamily New Construction program, that are at least 10 ft from the outlets of dwelling unit exhaust systems given the proximity to adjacent dwelling units and limited exterior wall area to locate intakes and outlets. A reduced separation distance would reduce the barrier to providing multifamily dwelling units and Townhouses with a dedicated supply of outdoor air.</p>
				<p>Resolution: EPA agrees that reducing the minimum required separation distance between air inlets and the outlets of both exhaust dwelling unit mechanical ventilation systems and local mechanical exhaust systems would increase the ability of project teams to design systems that provide outdoor air directly to multifamily dwelling units and Townhouses. For simplicity, the same allowance will be extended to other dwelling types eligible to participate in the Single-Family New Homes program. Note that the minimum required separation distance between air inlets and other known sources of contamination (e.g., combustion appliance vent terminations, vehicles) will remain the same.</p> <p>To reflect this change, a footnote will be added to Item 2.11 as follows:</p> <p><u>Two alternatives to the required 10 ft. distance are provided: 1) inlets providing outdoor air to a dwelling unit are permitted to be ≥ 5 ft. of stretched-string distance from outlets of both exhaust dwelling-unit mechanical ventilation systems and local mechanical exhaust systems, and 2) the outlet and inlet of ERV’s and HRV’s may use a smaller distance if allowed by the manufacturer of the system. If the second alternative is used, the manufacturer’s instructions shall be collected for documentation purposes.</u></p>

Current ENERGY STAR Single-Family New Homes Policy Record

01224	05/01/2023	National Water Management System Builder Requirements (Version 3 / 3.1 / 3.2, Rev. 12)	Clarification	Item 4.2 – Moisture resistant materials only required if backers are present
				<p>Issue: Partners have asked whether this Item, which generally requires the use of cement board or equivalent moisture-resistant backing materials behind tubs and showers, applies to enclosures that are not required to have backing materials (e.g., a 3-piece fiberglass tub enclosure).</p> <p>Resolution: The intent of this Item was to only require the use of moisture-resistant backing materials for enclosures where backing is present. The Item will be clarified, and better aligned with related code language, as follows:</p> <p><u>“Item 4.2: If present, backers for wall tile and wall panels in tub and shower enclosures are fiber-cement board complying with ASTM C1288 or ISO 8336, Category C, or an alternate material listed in the Footnote or equivalent moisture-resistant backing material installed on all walls behind tub and shower enclosures composed of tile or panel assemblies with caulked joints. Paper-faced backerboard shall not be used.”</u></p> <p>And Footnote 17 will be revised as follows:</p> <p><u>“In addition to fiber-cement board, fiber-mat reinforced cementitious panels complying with ASTM C1325; glass mat water-resistant gypsum panels complying with ASTM C1178; water-resistant fiber-reinforced gypsum panels complying with Section 6 of ASTM C1278; or materials that have been evaluated by ICC-ES per AC 115 may also be used to meet this requirement. Monolithic tub and shower enclosures (e.g., fiberglass with no seams) are exempt from this backing material requirement unless required by the manufacturer. Paper-faced backerboard may only be used behind monolithic enclosures or waterproof membranes that have been evaluated by ICC-ES per AC 115, and then only if it has received a rating of 10 when tested in accordance with meets ASTM mold-resistant standards ASTM D3273 or ASTM D6329.”</u></p>
01203	11/10/2022	National ERI Target Procedure (Version 3, Rev. 12)	Change	Exhibit 2 – ENERGY STAR Reference Design configured without on-site power
				<p>Issue: Partners have asked whether the ENERGY STAR Reference Design (ESRD) should be configured with On-Site Power Production (OPP) if such a system is present in the Rated Home. Because OPP is not one of the building components listed in the Expanded ENERGY STAR Reference Design Definition Exhibit and the document contains a footnote stating that “Any parameter not specified in this exhibit shall be identical to the value entered for the Rated Home”, one might infer that it is EPA’s intent for the ESRD to be configured with OPP.</p>

Current ENERGY STAR Single-Family New Homes Policy Record

				<p>Such a configuration would create unintended challenges because the related Program Requirements specify that “on-site power generation may not be used to meet the ENERGY STAR ERI Target”.</p> <p>Resolution: It is not EPA’s intent to make the ENERGY STAR ERI Target more stringent in cases where the Rated Home has OPP. To align the ENERGY STAR ERI Target Procedure with EPA’s intent, a new row will be added to the end of the ENERGY STAR Reference Design Definition Exhibit with the Building Component listed as “On-Site Power Production” and the Definition listed as “None”.</p>
01308	12/01/2023	National ERI Target Procedure (Version 3.1, Rev. 12)	Clarification	<p>Lighting, Appliances, & Internal Gains Section – Number of ceiling fans aligned with logic in ANSI / RESNET / ICC 301</p>
				<p>Issue: A partner has asked for clarification about the number of ceiling fans the ENERGY STAR Reference Design is intended to have.</p> <p>For context, ANSI / RESNET / ICC 301-2019 requires ceiling fans to be equal in number for both the reference and rated homes. However, if the number of ceiling fans present in the rated home is not at least equal to the number of bedrooms plus one, then neither home is modeled with ceiling fans.</p> <p>The National ERI Target Procedure was intended to apply the same logic. However, it states that the quantity of ceiling fans shall be equal to the number of bedrooms plus one “when ceiling fans are present in the Rated Home”. The partner is unclear whether the ENERGY STAR Reference Design should be configured with ceiling fans when any ceiling fans are present in the Rated Home, or only in cases where the Rated Home has a quantity at least equal to the number of bedrooms plus one. The latter interpretation was the intent.</p>
				<p>Resolution: To clarify this intent, the language in the ‘Lighting, Appliances, & Internal Gains’ Section will be revised as follows:</p> <p>“Ceiling Fan: 122 CFM per Watt; Quantity = <u>Same as Rated Home per ANSI / RESNET / ICC 301, either 0 or Number of bedrooms + 1</u> when ceiling fans present in the Rated Home; otherwise Quantity = 0”</p>
01204	11/10/2022	National ERI Target Procedure (Version 3.1, Rev. 12)	Change	<p>Exhibit 1 – ENERGY STAR Reference Design configured without on-site power</p>
				<p>Issue: Partners have asked whether the ENERGY STAR Reference Design (ESRD) should be configured with On-Site Power Production (OPP) if such a system is present in the Rated Home. Because OPP is not one of the building components listed in the Expanded ENERGY</p>

Current ENERGY STAR Single-Family New Homes Policy Record

				<p>STAR Reference Design Definition Exhibit and the document contains a footnote stating that “Any parameter not specified in this exhibit shall be identical to the value entered for the Rated Home”, one might infer that it is EPA’s intent for the ESRD to be configured with OPP.</p> <p>Such a configuration would create unintended challenges because the related Program Requirements specify that “on-site power generation may not be used to meet the ENERGY STAR ERI Target”.</p> <p>Resolution: It is not EPA’s intent to make the ENERGY STAR ERI Target more stringent in cases where the Rated Home has OPP. To align the ENERGY STAR ERI Target Procedure with EPA’s intent, a new row will be added to the end of the ENERGY STAR Reference Design Definition Exhibit with the Building Component listed as “On-Site Power Production” and the Definition listed as “None”.</p>
01266	12/01/2023	National ERI Target Procedure (Version 3.2, Rev. 12)	Change	<p>Glazing Section – SHGC revised from 0.40 to 0.30 in CZ’s 4-8</p> <p>Issue: A Solar Heat Gain Coefficient (SHGC) of 0.40 is used to configure the ENERGY STAR Reference Design in Climate Zones 4-8. This aligns with the maximum value allowed under the prescriptive path of the 2021 IECC in Climate Zones 4 and 5 and with the Standard Reference Design specifications in Table R405.4.2(1) for Climate Zones 4-8.</p> <p>However, windows with such a high SHGC are less common, are generally only appropriate for use in designs that are orientation-specific, and the stringency of the National v3.2 ENERGY STAR ERI Target makes it difficult to compensate when lower SHGC windows are used.</p> <p>A SHGC of 0.30 is commonly available in double silver window products that offer an appropriate balance between low U-factors and moderate SHGC in cold climates. This SHGC value was modeled in northern climates when analyzing the potential energy savings of the latest version of the ENERGY STAR Residential Windows, Doors, and Skylights specification.</p> <p>Resolution: To specify a more appropriate SHGC for cold climates, the value will be revised from 0.40 to 0.30 in Climate Zones 4-8.</p>
01309	12/01/2023	National ERI Target Procedure	Clarification	<p>Lighting, Appliances, & Internal Gains Section – Number of ceiling fans aligned with logic in ANSI / RESNET / ICC 301</p>

Current ENERGY STAR Single-Family New Homes Policy Record

		(Version 3.2, Rev. 12)		<p>Issue: A partner has asked for clarification about the number of ceiling fans the ENERGY STAR Reference Design is intended to have.</p> <p>For context, ANSI / RESNET / ICC 301-2019 requires ceiling fans to be equal in number for both the reference and rated homes. However, if the number of ceiling fans present in the rated home is not at least equal to the number of bedrooms plus one, then neither home is modeled with ceiling fans.</p> <p>The National ERI Target Procedure was intended to apply the same logic. However, it states that the quantity of ceiling fans shall be equal to the number of bedrooms plus one “when ceiling fans are present in the Rated Home”. The partner is unclear whether the ENERGY STAR Reference Design should be configured with ceiling fans when any ceiling fans are present in the Rated Home, or only in cases where the Rated Home has a quantity at least equal to the number of bedrooms plus one. The latter interpretation was the intent.</p>
				<p>Resolution: To clarify this intent, the language in the ‘Lighting, Appliances, & Internal Gains’ Section will be revised as follows:</p> <p>“Ceiling Fan: 122 CFM per Watt; Quantity = Same as Rated Home per ANSI / RESNET / ICC 301, either 0 or Number of bedrooms + 1 when ceiling fans present in the Rated Home; otherwise Quantity = 0”</p>
01249	12/01/2023	National ERI Target Procedure (Version 3.2, Rev. 12)	Clarification	<p>Service Water Heating Systems Section - Specification of First-Hour Rating</p> <p>Issue: Partners have noted that the ENERGY STAR Reference Design defines the efficiency of Service Water Heating Systems using the Uniform Energy Factor (UEF) metric, but does not specify an accompanying First-Hour Rating (FHR) value.</p> <p>In ANSI / RESNET / ICC 301-2022, FHR accompanies UEF as a Minimum Rated Feature. The FHR is used to assign a usage bin (i.e., low, medium, or high). For storage water heaters, a single UEF with two different usage bins will result in different estimates of consumption.</p> <p>Spot modeling completed by NREL suggests that for a given UEF, a water heater modeled with an FHR assigned to a medium usage bin results in the smallest difference in consumption when compared to a water heater with an equivalent EF value, as determined using RESNET’s UEF-to-EF conversion factor.</p> <p>In addition, the majority of ENERGY STAR heat pump water heaters, which is the type specified in Version 3.2 of the ENERGY STAR Reference Design, fall into the medium usage bin.</p>

Current ENERGY STAR Single-Family New Homes Policy Record

				<p>Resolution: Based on this information, the following logic will be specified for determining the FHR for electric water heaters:</p> <p>a. If FHR is provided for the Rated home, the Reference Design’s FHR will be set equal to the Rated Home’s FHR.</p> <p>b. If FHR is not provided for the Rated home, the Reference Design’s FHR will be set to 63 (the midpoint of the 51-75 “medium” usage bin).</p> <p>To reflect this, the System Type within this Section will be revised as follows:</p> <p>“System Type: Where Rated Home has non-electric water heater, Reference Design shall be configured with a tankless gas water heater with 0.90 UEF with no solar heating. Where Rated Home has electric water heater, Reference Design shall be configured with an electric heat pump water heater with 2.20 UEF with no solar heating; and tank size shall be equal to that of the Rated Home, or 60 gallons tank size if Rated Home uses tankless electric water heater; <u>and FHR shall be equal to the Rated Home or 63 if Rated Home does not specify FHR.</u>”</p> <p>Note that no FHR needs to be specified for gas water heaters because the National Version 3.2 ENERGY STAR Reference Design is configured with tankless (i.e., non-storage) equipment.</p>
01205	11/10/2022	National ERI Target Procedure (Version 3.2, Rev. 12)	Change	Exhibit 1 – ENERGY STAR Reference Design configured without on-site power
				<p>Issue: Partners have asked whether the ENERGY STAR Reference Design (ESRD) should be configured with On-Site Power Production (OPP) if such a system is present in the Rated Home. Because OPP is not one of the building components listed in the Expanded ENERGY STAR Reference Design Definition Exhibit and the document contains a footnote stating that “Any parameter not specified in this exhibit shall be identical to the value entered for the Rated Home”, one might infer that it is EPA’s intent for the ESRD to be configured with OPP.</p> <p>Such a configuration would create unintended challenges because the related Program Requirements specify that “on-site power generation may not be used to meet the ENERGY STAR ERI Target”.</p>
				<p>Resolution: It is not EPA’s intent to make the ENERGY STAR ERI Target more stringent in cases where the Rated Home has OPP. To align the ENERGY STAR ERI Target Procedure with EPA’s intent, a new row will be added to the end of the ENERGY STAR Reference</p>

Current ENERGY STAR Single-Family New Homes Policy Record

				Design Definition Exhibit with the Building Component listed as “On-Site Power Production” and the Definition listed as “None”.
01217	05/01/2023	California Program Requirements (Version 3.2, Rev. 12)	Clarification	Eligibility Requirements Section – Only detached, not attached, Dwellings are eligible to participate
				<p>Issue: Partners have asked whether only detached Dwellings are eligible to be certified using the Single-Family New Homes (SFNH) program, or if attached Dwellings may also be certified.</p> <p>The Eligibility Requirements state that Dwellings (e.g., single-family homes and duplexes) and Townhouses may be certified using the Single-Family New Homes program. In contrast to Townhouses, which are explicitly defined as attached structures, the definition of Dwelling does not distinguish between detached and attached structures: “..any building that contains one or two Dwelling Units used, intended, or designed to be built, used, rented, leased, let or hired out to be occupied, or that are occupied for living purposes.”</p> <p>Through the examples of Dwellings that are listed (single-family homes and duplexes), however, EPA intended to convey that only detached structures are eligible to be certified using the SFNH program.</p>
				<p>Resolution: To reinforce the original intent of the scope of the SFNH program, the Eligibility Requirements will be revised as follows:</p> <p>“Site-built or modular <u>detached</u> Dwellings (e.g., single-family homes and duplexes) and Townhouses are eligible to participate in the ENERGY STAR Single-Family New Homes (SFNH) program.”</p>
01315	12/01/2023	California Program Requirements (Version 3.2, Rev. 12)	Clarification	Eligibility Requirements Section – Link to new program document defining applicable program requirements, including the minimum Version and Revision, to which a home is eligible to be certified
				<p>Issue: The Eligibility Requirements Section defines what types of homes are eligible to participate in the SFNH program. However, it does not define the applicable program requirements, including the minimum version and revision, to which a home in a particular location is eligible to be certified. This is currently defined in the Effective Date Section of the same program document. Combining the two sections, such that all requirements related to eligibility are located in a single section, would be clearer.</p> <p>Furthermore, the current Effective Date Section lacks, or only implies, certain information that would be clearer if stated explicitly, including: a) expanding the table to include which program</p>

Current ENERGY STAR Single-Family New Homes Policy Record

				<p>version(s) are applicable to homes in all locations; b) expanding the table to include, where applicable, both the national version and regional version of the program requirements to which a home is eligible to be certified; and c) a statement that the listed versions are the minimum required; therefore, homes are eligible to be certified to higher versions of the same program.</p> <p>Resolution: To more clearly convey all eligibility requirements, the Effective Date Section, as well as Footnote 11 and 12, will be deleted and the following sentence will be added to the Eligibility Requirements Section:</p> <p><u>“To determine the applicable SFNH program requirements, including the minimum Version and Revision, to which a home is eligible to be certified, visit www.energystar.gov/SFNHVersions.”</u></p> <p>The new program document linked to in the sentence above will contain the applicable program requirements, including the minimum Version and Revision, for all locations; will include, where applicable, both the national version and regional version of the program requirements to which a home is eligible to be certified; and will state that the listed versions are the minimum required; therefore, homes are eligible to be certified to higher versions of the same program.</p>
01229	05/01/2023	California Program Requirements (Version 3.2, Rev. 12)	Clarification	<p>ENERGY STAR Certification Process Section - Pre-drywall inspection is always required</p> <p>Issue: Partners have periodically asked if there are alternative verification protocols available when a builder installs drywall before a home has had a pre-drywall inspection by the Rater.</p> <p>Step 4 of the ENERGY STAR Certification Process states that “the Rater must review all items on the National Rater checklists.. In the event that an item on a National Rater checklist cannot be inspected by the Rater, the home cannot earn the ENERGY STAR.”</p> <p>In addition, the Data Input requirements and On-Site Inspection Procedures for California HERS Ratings require visual inspection of multiple features, including framing members and wall insulation installation, which cannot be completed if the features are concealed.</p> <p>Given these current policies, the only recourse when drywall has been installed prior to visual verification is to remove the drywall to allow the inspection of the features pertaining to the Data Input requirements and On-Site Inspection Procedures for California HERS Ratings as well as the mandatory features of the ENERGY STAR Single-Family New Homes program (e.g. minimum insulation levels, Grade I or II insulation, air sealing details, a complete air barrier, advanced framing details, and ductwork installed without kinks and bends). No</p>

Current ENERGY STAR Single-Family New Homes Policy Record

				<p>alternative protocol has been identified that will deliver the same certainty as a pre-drywall inspection that all program requirements have been met.</p> <p>Resolution: To reinforce EPA’s current policy that a pre-drywall inspection is always required, and that drywall must be entirely removed to fully verify all Items if it has been installed prior to the inspection, Step 4 will be revised as follows:</p> <p>“Using a Rater, verify that all requirements have been met in accordance with the Mandatory Requirements for All Certified Homes and with the Data Input requirements and On-Site Inspection Procedures for California HERS Ratings. <u>This will require a minimum of two inspections: one at pre-drywall and the other at final.</u>”</p>
01300	12/01/2023	California Program Requirements (Version 3.2, Rev. 12)	Change	<p>ENERGY STAR Certification Process – Sunset of sampling protocols</p> <p>Issue: In July 2023, EPA held a stakeholder feedback period for a proposed sunset of sampling for the ENERGY STAR Single-Family New Homes (SFNH) program and for all townhouses.</p> <p>When first conceived, the sampling allowance was designed, in part, to broaden the reach of the ENERGY STAR program. Today, however, the use of sampling is prevalent only in a single market (Arizona), and outside of that state, more than 95% of single-family certifications in 2022 were based on individual inspections of each home.</p> <p>Because the data indicate that the national market at large has moved to individual inspections of homes, EPA believes it is appropriate to sunset the use of sampling for the ENERGY STAR Single-Family New Homes program.</p> <p>To provide greater assurance that all program requirements have been met in every certified home, EPA proposed to sunset the allowance to use sampling inspection protocols in the ENERGY STAR Single-Family New Homes program for homes permitted on or after 01/01/2025.</p> <p>Further, townhouses were proposed to not be allowed to use sampling inspection protocols, even when certified using the ENERGY STAR Multifamily New Construction (MFNC) program. However, all other building types eligible to be certified using the ENERGY STAR MFNC program would continue to be permitted to use sampling inspection protocols.</p> <p>EPA posted a response to comments and a finalized policy announcement in alignment with the proposal in the Fall of 2023.</p> <p>Resolution: To reflect the sunset of the allowance to use sampling inspection protocols in the ENERGY STAR Single-Family New Homes program for homes permitted on or after</p>

Current ENERGY STAR Single-Family New Homes Policy Record

				<p>01/01/2025, the following sentence will be added to Step 4 of the ENERGY STAR Certification Process:</p> <p>“Using a Rater, verify that all requirements have been met in accordance with the Mandatory Requirements for All Certified Homes and with Data Input requirements and On-Site Inspection Procedures for California HERS Ratings. <u>All items shall be verified for each certified home and sampling protocols shall not be used.</u>”</p> <p>In addition, Footnote 9, which included the allowance to use sampling, will be deleted.</p>
01282	12/01/2023	California Program Requirements (Version 3.2, Rev. 12)	Clarification	<p>ENERGY STAR Certification Process Section – Raters are to verify that items have been met within program-defined tolerances; not use discretion to discern intent of items</p>
				<p>Issue: The Certification Process Section contains statements regarding the verification of items on the program checklists that may incorrectly imply that Raters have the authority to interpret program intent, potentially leading to inconsistent implementation of the program requirements. Instead, it is the responsibility of EPA to ensure that each program requirement is sufficiently clear that all Raters can implement that policy consistently.</p> <p>Rather, the purpose of these statements was to clarify that minor deviations from a stated program requirement may be acceptable. Since the time that this language was first drafted, EPA has worked to define quantitative tolerances (e.g., Rater-measured ventilation rate must be within either ± 15 CFM or $\pm 15\%$ of design report value) to more clearly define how much variation is acceptable.</p>
				<p>Resolution: To better convey that Raters are to verify that checklist items have been met within program-defined tolerances, the following edits will be made to the Certification Process section:</p> <p>“The Rater must review all items on the National Rater checklists. Raters are expected to use their experience and discretion to verify that the overall intent of each inspection checklist item has been met <u>within program-defined tolerances</u> (i.e., identifying major defects that undermine the intent of the checklist item versus identifying minor defects that the Rater may deem acceptable)..</p> <p>In the event that a Rater determines that a program requirement has not been met <u>finds an item that is inconsistent with the intent of the checklists</u>, the home cannot earn the ENERGY STAR until the item is corrected...</p>

Current ENERGY STAR Single-Family New Homes Policy Record

				<p>In the event that a Rater is not able to determine whether a program requirement has been met an item is consistent with the intent (e.g., an alternative method of meeting a checklist requirement has been proposed), then the Rater shall consult their Provider.</p> <p>If EPA believes the current program requirements are sufficiently clear to determine whether the item in question intent has been met, then this guidance will be provided to the partner and enforced beginning with the house in question.”</p> <p>In addition, the following minor edit will be made to Footnote 5 for consistency:</p> <p>“Certification shall only be allowed if the Rater has determined that no equivalent option is available that could meet the intent of the conflicting requirement (e.g., switching from exterior to interior slab edge insulation).”</p>
01242	12/01/2023	California Program Requirements (Version 3.2, Rev. 12)	Refinement	Exhibit 1 – HVAC contractor may be required to provide documentation in Track A
				<p>Issue: This Exhibit lists the mandatory requirements for all certified homes. For the HVAC Installing Contractor, it states the following:</p> <p>“None. While the HVAC contractor plays a critical role in properly installing and commissioning a system, the Rater is the party responsible for assessing its installation quality in accordance with ANSI / RESNET / ACCA / ICC 310.”</p> <p>While HVAC contractors are not required to complete any program checklists, Partners have noted that the HVAC contractor is required in some cases to provide documentation to the Rater to support their assessment, most notably regarding the refrigerant system when the Weigh-In Method of ANSI / RESNET / ACCA / ICC 310 is used. The current language may create confusion by implying that they have no role in supporting the Rater’s assessment.</p>
				<p>Resolution: To reduce potential confusion, the language will be revised as follows:</p> <p>“None. While the HVAC contractor plays a critical role in properly installing and commissioning a system, the Rater is the party responsible for assessing its installation quality in accordance with, <u>per</u> ANSI / RESNET / ACCA / ICC 310. <u>However, the installing contractor may be required to provide documentation to support the Rater’s assessment (e.g., regarding the refrigerant system).</u>”</p>
01269	12/01/2023	California Program Requirements (Version 3.2, Rev. 12)	Change	Exhibit 2 – Removal of Provider discretion to define ‘Permit Date’ and addition of allowance to use Rater’s first site visit
				<p>Issue: Exhibit 2 defines which Versions and Revisions are required to be used and is dependent, in part, on the permit date of homes. A footnote associated with this exhibit</p>

Current ENERGY STAR Single-Family New Homes Policy Record

				<p>delineates the various ways that the permit date can be determined and includes an allowance for Providers to use their discretion when determining it. The allowance to use discretion may result in inconsistent implementation of the program requirements.</p> <p>Resolution: To ensure more consistent implementation of the program requirements, the allowance to use Provider discretion to define 'permit date' will be removed. At the same time, an additional alternative to 'permit date' that is commonly used in the industry and results in a more conservative (i.e., later) permit date will be added, based on the date of the Rater's first inspection. Another commonly used alternative in the industry, based on the permit application date, will not be added to the program because this could result in a less conservative (i.e., earlier) permit date than the program currently allows.</p> <p>As a result, the following edits will be made to Footnote 11:</p> <p>"The 'plan approval date' is the date that a jurisdiction approves a home plan and its efficiency features for use on a specific lot or tract. The Rater may define the 'permit date' as either is the date on which that the permit authorizing construction of the building was issued. <u>Alternatively, the date of the Rater's first site visit or the date of the contract on the home is allowed to be used as the 'permit date'.</u> The permit application date is not allowed to be used. In cases where permit or contract dates are not available, Providers have discretion to estimate permit dates based on other construction schedule factors. These assumptions should be both defensible and documented. As an exception, if a new plan is added to a specific tract's existing plan set and the new plan is subject to the same version of the energy code as the existing plan set, then the 'plan approval date' is considered to be the existing plan set's original plan approval date."</p>
01295	12/01/2023	California Program Requirements (Version 3.2, Rev. 12)	Change	<p>Exhibit 2 – Revised implementation timeline for California Version 3.4</p> <p>Issue: In May 2023, EPA released the finalized program requirements for Version 3.4 of the California Program Requirements, including the implementation date for the new version. Where the 2022 edition of the Building Energy Efficiency Standards (BEES) is required by the AHJ, homes permitted on or after 1/1/20245 are required to be certified using Version 3.4.</p> <p>Since that time, the IRS has released guidance related to ENERGY STAR program versions for the Section 45L Tax Credit for Energy Efficient Homes.</p> <p>Resolution: To better align with recently released guidance from the IRS related to eligible ENERGY STAR program versions for the Section 45L Tax Credit for Energy Efficient Homes, the previously announced implementation timeline for California Version 3.4 will be changed to 01/01/2026.</p>

Current ENERGY STAR Single-Family New Homes Policy Record

01209	11/10/2022	California Program Requirements (Version 3.2, Rev. 12)	Clarification	Exhibit 2 – Implementation timeline does not change with enforcement of new edition of CA Building Energy Efficiency Standards (BEES)
				<p>Issue: Partners have asked whether the applicable Version and Revision changes for homes with a pre-existing plan approval date when an AHJ begins enforcing a new edition of the BEES within a tract.</p> <p>For example, consider a tract that has a plan approval date of May 1, 2022, for which the 2019 edition of the BEES is enforced. The AHJ begins enforcing the 2022 edition of the BEES for homes in that tract that are permitted after January 1, 2023. Does the applicable Version and Revision change with enforcement of the new code?</p>
				<p>Resolution: EPA recognizes that the current policy is ambiguous about which Version and Revision is applicable when an AHJ begins enforcing a new edition of the BEES within a tract, after initial plan approval. At this time, EPA is clarifying that the Version and Revision that is applicable to a tract does not change with the enforcement of a new edition of the BEES. While new editions of the BEES may trigger revisions to the plans, the original Plan Approval Date remains unchanged and is to be used to determine the applicable Version and Revision.</p> <p>With that said, EPA recognizes that the clarified policy may result in tracts being developed over an extended period of time that are not subjected to the latest Version of ENERGY STAR, even as codes continue to progress. For this reason, EPA intends to revisit how to define the implementation timeline for its California program requirements during the development of the next Version. At that time, EPA will also propose and seek partner feedback on revising the implementation timeline for Version 3.2 and 3.3 of its California program requirements.</p>
01328	12/01/2023	California Program Requirements (Version 3.2, Rev. 12)	Refinement	Footnote 8 – Deletion of hyperlink
				<p>Issue: Partners have noted that the hyperlink for the website that provides information on the Delta EDR is no longer working.</p>
				<p>Resolution: EPA could not locate that this resource currently exists on any website, and EPA notes that the California 2016 Building Energy Efficiency Standards are an older version of code that is less likely to be used going forward.</p> <p>Therefore, the first sentence of Footnote 8, including the broken hyperlink, will be deleted.</p>

Current ENERGY STAR Single-Family New Homes Policy Record

01288	12/01/2023	California Program Requirements (Version 3.2, Rev. 12)	Change	Footnote 12: Continued use of Rev. 08, 09, 10, 11 and 12 HVAC Design Report
				<p>Issue: Due to the effort required to collect the HVAC Design Report, partners have asked whether previously collected Rev. 08, Rev. 09, Rev. 10, Rev. 11 and Rev. 12 HVAC Design Reports can continue to be used after the release of the next Revision of the program requirements, so long as no aspect of the system design changes.</p> <p>Resolution: Because the next Revision of the program checklists will not require collection of any additional information or impose any new requirements, and will maintain or increase compliance tolerances, a design documented using Rev. 08, Rev. 09, Rev. 10, Rev. 11, or Rev. 12 of the National HVAC Design Report would, by definition, meet the requirements of Rev. 13.</p> <p>Therefore, previously collected Rev. 08, Rev. 09, Rev. 10, Rev. 11, or Rev. 12 National HVAC Design Reports will be permitted to be used after the release of the next Revision of the program requirements, so long as no aspect of the building design changes. For building designs that are not identical to prior designs (e.g., due to new equipment that is rated in SEER2 instead of SEER), then a new HVAC Design Report must be completed and collected.</p> <p>To reflect this change, Footnote 12 will be updated as follows:</p> <p><u>“Homes certified under Rev. 123 of the program requirements are permitted to use either any Revision of the National HVAC Design Report between Rev. 08, 09, 10, 11, or 12 and Rev. 13 of the National HVAC Design Report.”</u></p>
01218	05/01/2023	California Program Requirements (Version 3.3, Rev. 12)	Clarification	Eligibility Requirements Section – Only detached, not attached, Dwellings are eligible to participate
				<p>Issue: Partners have asked whether only detached Dwellings are eligible to be certified using the Single-Family New Homes (SFNH) program, or if attached Dwellings may also be certified.</p> <p>The Eligibility Requirements state that Dwellings (e.g., single-family homes and duplexes) and Townhouses may be certified using the Single-Family New Homes program. In contrast to Townhouses, which are explicitly defined as attached structures, the definition of Dwelling does not distinguish between detached and attached structures: “..any building that contains one or two Dwelling Units used, intended, or designed to be built, used, rented, leased, let or hired out to be occupied, or that are occupied for living purposes.”</p>

Current ENERGY STAR Single-Family New Homes Policy Record

				<p>Through the examples of Dwellings that are listed (single-family homes and duplexes), however, EPA intended to convey that only detached structures are eligible to be certified using the SFNH program.</p> <p>Resolution: To reinforce the original intent of the scope of the SFNH program, the Eligibility Requirements will be revised as follows:</p> <p>“Site-built or modular <u>detached</u> Dwellings (e.g., single-family homes and duplexes) and Townhouses are eligible to participate in the ENERGY STAR Single-Family New Homes (SFNH) program.”</p>
01316	12/01/2023	California Program Requirements (Version 3.3, Rev. 12)	Clarification	<p>Eligibility Requirements Section – Link to new program document defining applicable program requirements, including the minimum Version and Revision, to which a home is eligible to be certified</p> <p>Issue: The Eligibility Requirements Section defines what types of homes are eligible to participate in the SFNH program. However, it does not define the applicable program requirements, including the minimum version and revision, to which a home in a particular location is eligible to be certified. This is currently defined in the Effective Date Section of the same program document. Combining the two sections, such that all requirements related to eligibility are located in a single section, would be clearer.</p> <p>Furthermore, the current Effective Date Section lacks, or only implies, certain information that would be clearer if stated explicitly, including: a) expanding the table to include which program version(s) are applicable to homes in all locations; b) expanding the table to include, where applicable, both the national version and regional version of the program requirements to which a home is eligible to be certified; and c) a statement that the listed versions are the minimum required; therefore, homes are eligible to be certified to higher versions of the same program.</p> <p>Resolution: To more clearly convey all eligibility requirements, the Effective Date Section, as well as Footnote 11 and 12, will be deleted and the following sentence will be added to the Eligibility Requirements Section:</p> <p>“<u>To determine the applicable SFNH program requirements, including the minimum Version and Revision, to which a home is eligible to be certified, visit www.energystar.gov/SFNHversions.</u>”</p> <p>The new program document linked to in the sentence above will contain the applicable program requirements, including the minimum Version and Revision, for all locations; will include, where applicable, both the national version and regional version of the program requirements to which a home is eligible to be certified; and will state that the listed versions</p>

Current ENERGY STAR Single-Family New Homes Policy Record

				are the minimum required; therefore, homes are eligible to be certified to higher versions of the same program.
01230	05/01/2023	California Program Requirements (Version 3.3, Rev. 12)	Clarification	ENERGY STAR Certification Process Section - Pre-drywall inspection is always required
				<p>Issue: Partners have periodically asked if there are alternative verification protocols available when a builder installs drywall before a home has had a pre-drywall inspection by the Rater.</p> <p>Step 4 of the ENERGY STAR Certification Process states that “the Rater must review all items on the National Rater checklists.. In the event that an item on a National Rater checklist cannot be inspected by the Rater, the home cannot earn the ENERGY STAR.”</p> <p>In addition, the Data Input requirements and On-Site Inspection Procedures for California HERS Ratings require visual inspection of multiple features, including framing members and wall insulation installation, which cannot be completed if the features are concealed.</p> <p>Given these current policies, the only recourse when drywall has been installed prior to visual verification is to remove the drywall to allow the inspection of the features pertaining to the Data Input requirements and On-Site Inspection Procedures for California HERS Ratings as well as the mandatory features of the ENERGY STAR Single-Family New Homes program (e.g. minimum insulation levels, Grade I or II insulation, air sealing details, a complete air barrier, advanced framing details, and ductwork installed without kinks and bends). No alternative protocol has been identified that will deliver the same certainty as a pre-drywall inspection that all program requirements have been met.</p>
				<p>Resolution: To reinforce EPA’s current policy that a pre-drywall inspection is always required, and that drywall must be entirely removed to fully verify all Items if it has been installed prior to the inspection, Step 4 will be revised as follows:</p> <p>“Using a Rater, verify that all requirements have been met in accordance with the Mandatory Requirements for All Certified Homes and with the Data Input requirements and On-Site Inspection Procedures for California HERS Ratings. <u>This will require a minimum of two inspections: one at pre-drywall and the other at final.</u>”</p>
01299	12/01/2023	California Program Requirements (Version 3.3, Rev. 12)	Change	ENERGY STAR Certification Process – Sunset of sampling protocols
				<p>Issue: In July 2023, EPA held a stakeholder feedback period for a proposed sunset of sampling for the ENERGY STAR Single-Family New Homes (SFNH) program and for all townhouses.</p>

Current ENERGY STAR Single-Family New Homes Policy Record

				<p>When first conceived, the sampling allowance was designed, in part, to broaden the reach of the ENERGY STAR program. Today, however, the use of sampling is prevalent only in a single market (Arizona), and outside of that state, more than 95% of single-family certifications in 2022 were based on individual inspections of each home.</p> <p>Because the data indicate that the national market at large has moved to individual inspections of homes, EPA believes it is appropriate to sunset the use of sampling for the ENERGY STAR Single-Family New Homes program.</p> <p>To provide greater assurance that all program requirements have been met in every certified home, EPA proposed to sunset the allowance to use sampling inspection protocols in the ENERGY STAR Single-Family New Homes program for homes permitted on or after 01/01/2025.</p> <p>Further, townhouses were proposed to not be allowed to use sampling inspection protocols, even when certified using the ENERGY STAR Multifamily New Construction (MFNC) program. However, all other building types eligible to be certified using the ENERGY STAR MFNC program would continue to be permitted to use sampling inspection protocols.</p> <p>EPA posted a response to comments and a finalized policy announcement in alignment with the proposal in the Fall of 2023.</p>
				<p>Resolution: To reflect the sunset of the allowance to use sampling inspection protocols in the ENERGY STAR Single-Family New Homes program for homes permitted on or after 01/01/2025, the following sentence will be added to Step 4 of the ENERGY STAR Certification Process:</p> <p>“Using a Rater, verify that all requirements have been met in accordance with the Mandatory Requirements for All Certified Homes and with Data Input requirements and On-Site Inspection Procedures for California HERS Ratings. <u>All items shall be verified for each certified home and sampling protocols shall not be used.</u>”</p> <p>In addition, Footnote 8, which included the allowance to use sampling, will be deleted.</p>
01281	12/01/2023	California Program Requirements (Version 3.3, Rev. 12)	Clarification	<p>ENERGY STAR Certification Process Section – Raters are to verify that items have been met within program-defined tolerances; not use discretion to discern intent of items</p> <p>Issue: The Certification Process Section contains statements regarding the verification of items on the program checklists that may incorrectly imply that Raters have the authority to interpret program intent, potentially leading to inconsistent implementation of the program</p>

Current ENERGY STAR Single-Family New Homes Policy Record

				<p>requirements. Instead, it is the responsibility of EPA to ensure that each program requirement is sufficiently clear that all Raters can implement that policy consistently.</p> <p>Rather, the purpose of these statements was to clarify that minor deviations from a stated program requirement may be acceptable. Since the time that this language was first drafted, EPA has worked to define quantitative tolerances (e.g., Rater-measured ventilation rate must be within either ± 15 CFM or $\pm 15\%$ of design report value) to more clearly define how much variation is acceptable.</p>
				<p>Resolution: To better convey that Raters are to verify that checklist items have been met within program-defined tolerances, the following edits will be made to the Certification Process section:</p> <p>“The Rater must review all items on the National Rater checklists. Raters are expected to use their experience and discretion to verify that the overall intent of each inspection checklist item has been met within program-defined tolerances (i.e., identifying major defects that undermine the intent of the checklist item versus identifying minor defects that the Rater may deem acceptable)..”</p> <p>In the event that a Rater determines that a program requirement has not been met finds an item that is inconsistent with the intent of the checklists, the home cannot earn the ENERGY STAR until the item is corrected...</p> <p>In the event that a Rater is not able to determine whether <u>a program requirement has been met</u> an item is consistent with the intent (e.g., an alternative method of meeting a checklist requirement has been proposed), then the Rater shall consult their Provider.</p> <p>If EPA believes the current program requirements are sufficiently clear to determine whether the <u>item in question</u> intent has been met, then this guidance will be provided to the partner and enforced beginning with the house in question.”</p> <p>In addition, the following minor edit will be made to Footnote 4 for consistency:</p> <p>“Certification shall only be allowed if the Rater has determined that no equivalent option is available that could meet the intent of the conflicting requirement (e.g., switching from exterior to interior slab edge insulation).”</p>
01243	12/01/2023	California Program Requirements (Version 3.3, Rev. 12)	Refinement	<p>Exhibit 1 – HVAC contractor may be required to provide documentation in Track A</p> <p>Issue: This Exhibit lists the mandatory requirements for all certified homes. For the HVAC Installing Contractor, it states the following:</p>

Current ENERGY STAR Single-Family New Homes Policy Record

				<p>“None. While the HVAC contractor plays a critical role in properly installing and commissioning a system, the Rater is the party responsible for assessing its installation quality in accordance with ANSI / RESNET / ACCA / ICC 310.”</p> <p>While HVAC contractors are not required to complete any program checklists, Partners have noted that the HVAC contractor is required in some cases to provide documentation to the Rater to support their assessment, most notably regarding the refrigerant system when the Weigh-In Method of ANSI / RESNET / ACCA / ICC 310 is used. The current language may create confusion by implying that they have no role in supporting the Rater’s assessment.</p>
				<p>Resolution: To reduce potential confusion, the language will be revised as follows:</p> <p>“None. While the HVAC contractor plays a critical role in properly installing and commissioning a system, the Rater is the party responsible for assessing its installation quality in accordance with, <u>per</u> ANSI / RESNET / ACCA / ICC 310. However, the installing contractor may be required to provide documentation to support the Rater’s assessment (e.g., regarding the refrigerant system).”</p>
01270	12/01/2023	California Program Requirements (Version 3.3, Rev. 12)	Change	<p>Exhibit 2 – Removal of Provider discretion to define ‘Permit Date’ and addition of allowance to use Rater’s first site visit</p> <p>Issue: Exhibit 2 defines which Versions and Revisions are required to be used and is dependent, in part, on the permit date of homes. A footnote associated with this exhibit delineates the various ways that the permit date can be determined and includes an allowance for Providers to use their discretion when determining it. The allowance to use discretion may result in inconsistent implementation of the program requirements.</p> <p>Resolution: To ensure more consistent implementation of the program requirements, the allowance to use Provider discretion to define ‘permit date’ will be removed. At the same time, an additional alternative to ‘permit date’ that is commonly used in the industry and results in a more conservative (i.e., later) permit date will be added, based on the date of the Rater’s first inspection. Another commonly used alternative in the industry, based on the permit application date, will not be added to the program because this could result in a less conservative (i.e., earlier) permit date than the program currently allows.</p> <p>As a result, the following edits will be made to Footnote 11:</p> <p>“The ‘plan approval date’ is the date that a jurisdiction approves a home plan and its efficiency features for use on a specific lot or tract. The Rater may define the ‘permit date’ as either is the date on which that the permit <u>authorizing construction of the building</u> was issued. Alternatively, <u>the date of the Rater’s first site visit or the date of the contract on the home is allowed to be</u></p>

Current ENERGY STAR Single-Family New Homes Policy Record

				<p>used as the 'permit date'. The permit application date is not allowed to be used. In cases where permit or contract dates are not available, Providers have discretion to estimate permit dates based on other construction schedule factors. These assumptions should be both defensible and documented. As an exception, if a new plan is added to a specific tract's existing plan set and the new plan is subject to the same version of the energy code as the existing plan set, then the 'plan approval date' is considered to be the existing plan set's original plan approval date."</p>
01296	12/01/2023	California Program Requirements (Version 3.3, Rev. 12)	Change	<p>Exhibit 2 – Revised implementation timeline for California Version 3.4</p>
				<p>Issue: In May 2023, EPA released the finalized program requirements for Version 3.4 of the California Program Requirements, including the implementation date for the new version. Where the 2022 edition of the Building Energy Efficiency Standards (BEES) is required by the AHJ, homes permitted on or after 1/1/2024⁴⁵ are required to be certified using Version 3.4.</p> <p>Since that time, the IRS has released guidance related to ENERGY STAR program versions for the Section 45L Tax Credit for Energy Efficient Homes.</p>
				<p>Resolution: To better align with recently released guidance from the IRS related to eligible ENERGY STAR program versions for the Section 45L Tax Credit for Energy Efficient Homes, the previously announced implementation timeline for California Version 3.4 will be changed to 01/01/2026.</p>
01210	11/10/2022	California Program Requirements (Version 3.3, Rev. 12)	Clarification	<p>Exhibit 2 – Implementation timeline does not change with enforcement of new edition of CA Building Energy Efficiency Standards (BEES)</p>
				<p>Issue: Partners have asked whether the applicable Version and Revision changes for homes with a pre-existing plan approval date when an AHJ begins enforcing a new edition of the BEES within a tract.</p> <p>For example, consider a tract that has a plan approval date of May 1, 2022, for which the 2019 edition of the BEES is enforced. The AHJ begins enforcing the 2022 edition of the BEES for homes in that tract that are permitted after January 1, 2023. Does the applicable Version and Revision change with enforcement of the new code?</p>
				<p>Resolution: EPA recognizes that the current policy is ambiguous about which Version and Revision is applicable when an AHJ begins enforcing a new edition of the BEES within a tract, after initial plan approval. At this time, EPA is clarifying that the Version and Revision that is applicable to a tract does not change with the enforcement of a new edition of the BEES. While new editions of the BEES may trigger revisions to the plans, the original Plan</p>

Current ENERGY STAR Single-Family New Homes Policy Record

				<p>Approval Date remains unchanged and is to be used to determine the applicable Version and Revision.</p> <p>With that said, EPA recognizes that the clarified policy may result in tracts being developed over an extended period of time that are not subjected to the latest Version of ENERGY STAR, even as codes continue to progress. For this reason, EPA intends to revisit how to define the implementation timeline for its California program requirements during the development of the next Version. At that time, EPA will also propose and seek partner feedback on revising the implementation timeline for Version 3.2 and 3.3 of its California program requirements.</p>
01289	12/01/2023	California Program Requirements (Version 3.3, Rev. 12)	Change	<p>Footnote 12: Continued use of Rev. 08, 09, 10, 11 and 12 HVAC Design Report</p>
				<p>Issue: Due to the effort required to collect the HVAC Design Report, partners have asked whether previously collected Rev. 08, Rev. 09, Rev. 10, Rev. 11 and Rev. 12 HVAC Design Reports can continue to be used after the release of the next Revision of the program requirements, so long as no aspect of the system design changes.</p>
				<p>Resolution: Because the next Revision of the program checklists will not require collection of any additional information or impose any new requirements, and will maintain or increase compliance tolerances, a design documented using Rev. 08, Rev. 09, Rev. 10, Rev. 11, or Rev. 12 of the National HVAC Design Report would, by definition, meet the requirements of Rev. 13.</p> <p>Therefore, previously collected Rev. 08, Rev. 09, Rev. 10, Rev. 11, or Rev. 12 National HVAC Design Reports will be permitted to be used after the release of the next Revision of the program requirements, so long as no aspect of the building design changes. For building designs that are not identical to prior designs (e.g., due to new equipment that is rated in SEER2 instead of SEER), then a new HVAC Design Report must be completed and collected.</p> <p>To reflect this change, Footnote 12 will be updated as follows:</p> <p>“Homes certified under Rev. 12³ of the program requirements are permitted to use either <u>any Revision of the National HVAC Design Report between Rev. 08, 09, 10, 11, or 12 and Rev. 13 of the National HVAC Design Report.</u>”</p>
01219	05/01/2023	California Program Requirements	Clarification	<p>Eligibility Requirements Section – Only detached, not attached, Dwellings are eligible to participate</p>

Current ENERGY STAR Single-Family New Homes Policy Record

		(Version 3.4, Rev. 12)		<p>Issue: Partners have asked whether only detached Dwellings are eligible to be certified using the Single-Family New Homes (SFNH) program, or if attached Dwellings may also be certified.</p> <p>The Eligibility Requirements state that Dwellings (e.g., single-family homes and duplexes) and Townhouses may be certified using the Single-Family New Homes program. In contrast to Townhouses, which are explicitly defined as attached structures, the definition of Dwelling does not distinguish between detached and attached structures: “..any building that contains one or two Dwelling Units used, intended, or designed to be built, used, rented, leased, let or hired out to be occupied, or that are occupied for living purposes.”</p> <p>Through the examples of Dwellings that are listed (single-family homes and duplexes), however, EPA intended to convey that only detached structures are eligible to be certified using the SFNH program.</p>
				<p>Resolution: To reinforce the original intent of the scope of the SFNH program, the Eligibility Requirements will be revised as follows:</p> <p>“Site-built or modular <u>detached</u> Dwellings (e.g., single-family homes and duplexes) and Townhouses are eligible to participate in the ENERGY STAR Single-Family New Homes (SFNH) program.”</p>
01317	12/01/2023	California Program Requirements (Version 3.4, Rev. 12)	Clarification	<p>Eligibility Requirements Section – Link to new program document defining applicable program requirements, including the minimum Version and Revision, to which a home is eligible to be certified</p> <p>Issue: The Eligibility Requirements Section defines what types of homes are eligible to participate in the SFNH program. However, it does not define the applicable program requirements, including the minimum version and revision, to which a home in a particular location is eligible to be certified. This is currently defined in the Effective Date Section of the same program document. Combining the two sections, such that all requirements related to eligibility are located in a single section, would be clearer.</p> <p>Furthermore, the current Effective Date Section lacks, or only implies, certain information that would be clearer if stated explicitly, including: a) expanding the table to include which program version(s) are applicable to homes in all locations; b) expanding the table to include, where applicable, both the national version and regional version of the program requirements to which a home is eligible to be certified; and c) a statement that the listed versions are the minimum required; therefore, homes are eligible to be certified to higher versions of the same program.</p>

Current ENERGY STAR Single-Family New Homes Policy Record

				<p>Resolution: To more clearly convey all eligibility requirements, the Effective Date Section, as well as Footnote 11 and 12, will be deleted and the following sentence will be added to the Eligibility Requirements Section:</p> <p><u>“To determine the applicable SFNH program requirements, including the minimum Version and Revision, to which a home is eligible to be certified, visit www.energystar.gov/SFNHVersions.”</u></p> <p>The new program document linked to in the sentence above will contain the applicable program requirements, including the minimum Version and Revision, for all locations; will include, where applicable, both the national version and regional version of the program requirements to which a home is eligible to be certified; and will state that the listed versions are the minimum required; therefore, homes are eligible to be certified to higher versions of the same program.</p>
01231	05/01/2023	California Program Requirements (Version 3.4, Rev. 12)	Clarification	<p>ENERGY STAR Certification Process Section - Pre-drywall inspection is always required</p> <p>Issue: Partners have periodically asked if there are alternative verification protocols available when a builder installs drywall before a home has had a pre-drywall inspection by the Rater.</p> <p>Step 4 of the ENERGY STAR Certification Process states that “the Rater must review all items on the National Rater checklists.. In the event that an item on a National Rater checklist cannot be inspected by the Rater, the home cannot earn the ENERGY STAR.”</p> <p>In addition, the Data Input requirements and On-Site Inspection Procedures for California HERS Ratings require visual inspection of multiple features, including framing members and wall insulation installation, which cannot be completed if the features are concealed.</p> <p>Given these current policies, the only recourse when drywall has been installed prior to visual verification is to remove the drywall to allow the inspection of the features pertaining to the Data Input requirements and On-Site Inspection Procedures for California HERS Ratings as well as the mandatory features of the ENERGY STAR Single-Family New Homes program (e.g. minimum insulation levels, Grade I or II insulation, air sealing details, a complete air barrier, advanced framing details, and ductwork installed without kinks and bends). No alternative protocol has been identified that will deliver the same certainty as a pre-drywall inspection that all program requirements have been met.</p> <p>Resolution: To reinforce EPA’s current policy that a pre-drywall inspection is always required, and that drywall must be entirely removed to fully verify all Items if it has been installed prior to the inspection, Step 4 will be revised as follows:</p>

Current ENERGY STAR Single-Family New Homes Policy Record

				<p>“Using a Rater, verify that all requirements have been met in accordance with the Mandatory Requirements for All Certified Homes and with the Data Input requirements and On-Site Inspection Procedures for California HERS Ratings. <u>This will require a minimum of two inspections: one at pre-drywall and the other at final.</u>”</p>
01298	12/01/2023	California Program Requirements (Version 3.4, Rev. 12)	Change	<p>ENERGY STAR Certification Process – Sunset of sampling protocols</p>
				<p>Issue: In July 2023, EPA held a stakeholder feedback period for a proposed sunset of sampling for the ENERGY STAR Single-Family New Homes (SFNH) program and for all townhouses.</p> <p>When first conceived, the sampling allowance was designed, in part, to broaden the reach of the ENERGY STAR program. Today, however, the use of sampling is prevalent only in a single market (Arizona), and outside of that state, more than 95% of single-family certifications in 2022 were based on individual inspections of each home.</p> <p>Because the data indicate that the national market at large has moved to individual inspections of homes, EPA believes it is appropriate to sunset the use of sampling for the ENERGY STAR Single-Family New Homes program.</p> <p>To provide greater assurance that all program requirements have been met in every certified home, EPA proposed to sunset the allowance to use sampling inspection protocols in the ENERGY STAR Single-Family New Homes program for homes permitted on or after 01/01/2025.</p> <p>Further, townhouses were proposed to not be allowed to use sampling inspection protocols, even when certified using the ENERGY STAR Multifamily New Construction (MFNC) program. However, all other building types eligible to be certified using the ENERGY STAR MFNC program would continue to be permitted to use sampling inspection protocols.</p> <p>EPA posted a response to comments and a finalized policy announcement in alignment with the proposal in the Fall of 2023.</p>
				<p>Resolution: To reflect the sunset of the allowance to use sampling inspection protocols in the ENERGY STAR Single-Family New Homes program for homes permitted on or after 01/01/2025, the following sentence will be added to Step 4 of the ENERGY STAR Certification Process:</p> <p>“Using a Rater, verify that all requirements have been met in accordance with the Mandatory Requirements for All Certified Homes and with Data Input requirements and On-Site Inspection</p>

Current ENERGY STAR Single-Family New Homes Policy Record

				<p>Procedures for California HERS Ratings. <u>All items shall be verified for each certified home and sampling protocols shall not be used.</u></p> <p>In addition, Footnote 8, which included the allowance to use sampling, will be deleted.</p>
01280	12/01/2023	California Program Requirements (Version 3.4, Rev. 12)	Clarification	<p>ENERGY STAR Certification Process Section – Raters are to verify that items have been met within program-defined tolerances; not use discretion to discern intent of items</p>
				<p>Issue: The Certification Process Section contains statements regarding the verification of items on the program checklists that may incorrectly imply that Raters have the authority to interpret program intent, potentially leading to inconsistent implementation of the program requirements. Instead, it is the responsibility of EPA to ensure that each program requirement is sufficiently clear that all Raters can implement that policy consistently.</p> <p>Rather, the purpose of these statements was to clarify that minor deviations from a stated program requirement may be acceptable. Since the time that this language was first drafted, EPA has worked to define quantitative tolerances (e.g., Rater-measured ventilation rate must be within either ± 15 CFM or $\pm 15\%$ of design report value) to more clearly define how much variation is acceptable.</p>
				<p>Resolution: To better convey that Raters are to verify that checklist items have been met within program-defined tolerances, the following edits will be made to the Certification Process section:</p> <p>“The Rater must review all items on the National Rater checklists. Raters are expected to use their experience and discretion to verify that the overall intent of each inspection checklist item has been met within program-defined tolerances (i.e., identifying major defects that undermine the intent of the checklist item versus identifying minor defects that the Rater may deem acceptable).”</p> <p>In the event that a Rater <u>determines that a program requirement has not been met</u> finds an item that is inconsistent with the intent of the checklists, the home cannot earn the ENERGY STAR until the item is corrected...</p> <p>In the event that a Rater is not able to determine whether <u>a program requirement has been met</u> an item is consistent with the intent (e.g., an alternative method of meeting a checklist requirement has been proposed), then the Rater shall consult their Provider.</p>

Current ENERGY STAR Single-Family New Homes Policy Record

				<p>If EPA believes the current program requirements are sufficiently clear to determine whether the item in question intent has been met, then this guidance will be provided to the partner and enforced beginning with the house in question.”</p> <p>In addition, the following minor edit will be made to Footnote 4 for consistency:</p> <p>“Certification shall only be allowed if the Rater has determined that no equivalent option is available that could meet the intent of the conflicting requirement (e.g., switching from exterior to interior slab edge insulation).”</p>
01244	12/01/2023	California Program Requirements (Version 3.4, Rev. 12)	Refinement	Exhibit 1 – HVAC contractor may be required to provide documentation in Track A
				<p>Issue: This Exhibit lists the mandatory requirements for all certified homes. For the HVAC Installing Contractor, it states the following:</p> <p>“None. While the HVAC contractor plays a critical role in properly installing and commissioning a system, the Rater is the party responsible for assessing its installation quality in accordance with ANSI / RESNET / ACCA / ICC 310.”</p> <p>While HVAC contractors are not required to complete any program checklists, Partners have noted that the HVAC contractor is required in some cases to provide documentation to the Rater to support their assessment, most notably regarding the refrigerant system when the Weigh-In Method of ANSI / RESNET / ACCA / ICC 310 is used. The current language may create confusion by implying that they have no role in supporting the Rater’s assessment.</p>
				<p>Resolution: To reduce potential confusion, the language will be revised as follows:</p> <p>“None. While the HVAC contractor plays a critical role in properly installing and commissioning a system, the Rater is the party responsible for assessing its installation quality in accordance with, <u>per</u> ANSI / RESNET / ACCA / ICC 310. <u>However, the installing contractor may be required to provide documentation to support the Rater’s assessment (e.g., regarding the refrigerant system).</u>”</p>
01271	12/01/2023	California Program Requirements (Version 3.4, Rev. 12)	Change	Exhibit 2 – Removal of Provider discretion to define ‘Permit Date’ and addition of allowance to use Rater’s first site visit
				<p>Issue: Exhibit 2 defines which Versions and Revisions are required to be used and is dependent, in part, on the permit date of homes. A footnote associated with this exhibit delineates the various ways that the permit date can be determined and includes an allowance for Providers to use their discretion when determining it. The allowance to use discretion may result in inconsistent implementation of the program requirements.</p>

Current ENERGY STAR Single-Family New Homes Policy Record

				<p>Resolution: To ensure more consistent implementation of the program requirements, the allowance to use Provider discretion to define ‘permit date’ will be removed. At the same time, an additional alternative to ‘permit date’ that is commonly used in the industry and results in a more conservative (i.e., later) permit date will be added, based on the date of the Rater’s first inspection. Another commonly used alternative in the industry, based on the permit application date, will not be added to the program because this could result in a less conservative (i.e., earlier) permit date than the program currently allows.</p> <p>As a result, the following edits will be made to Footnote 11:</p> <p>“The ‘plan approval date’ is the date that a jurisdiction approves a home plan and its efficiency features for use on a specific lot or tract. The Rater may define the ‘permit date’ as either is the date on which that the permit <u>authorizing construction of the building</u> was issued. <u>Alternatively, the date of the Rater’s first site visit or the date of the contract on the home is allowed to be used as the ‘permit date’.</u> The permit application date is not allowed to be used. In cases where permit or contract dates are not available, Providers have discretion to estimate permit dates based on other construction schedule factors. These assumptions should be both defensible and documented. As an exception, if a new plan is added to a specific tract’s existing plan set and the new plan is subject to the same version of the energy code as the existing plan set, then the ‘plan approval date’ is considered to be the existing plan set’s original plan approval date.”</p>
01297	12/01/2023	California Program Requirements (Version 3.4, Rev. 12)	Change	Exhibit 2 – Revised implementation timeline for California Version 3.4
				<p>Issue: In May 2023, EPA released the finalized program requirements for Version 3.4 of the California Program Requirements, including the implementation date for the new version. Where the 2022 edition of the Building Energy Efficiency Standards (BEES) is required by the AHJ, homes permitted on or after 1/1/20245 are required to be certified using Version 3.4.</p> <p>Since that time, the IRS has released guidance related to ENERGY STAR program versions for the Section 45L Tax Credit for Energy Efficient Homes.</p>
				<p>Resolution: To better align with recently released guidance from the IRS related to eligible ENERGY STAR program versions for the Section 45L Tax Credit for Energy Efficient Homes, the previously announced implementation timeline for California Version 3.4 will be changed to 01/01/2026.</p>
01290	12/01/2023	California Program Requirements	Change	Footnote 12: Continued use of Rev. 08, 09, 10, 11 and 12 HVAC Design Report

Current ENERGY STAR Single-Family New Homes Policy Record

		(Version 3.4, Rev. 12)		<p>Issue: Due to the effort required to collect the HVAC Design Report, partners have asked whether previously collected Rev. 08, Rev. 09, Rev. 10, Rev. 11 and Rev. 12 HVAC Design Reports can continue to be used after the release of the next Revision of the program requirements, so long as no aspect of the system design changes.</p> <p>Resolution: Because the next Revision of the program checklists will not require collection of any additional information or impose any new requirements, and will maintain or increase compliance tolerances, a design documented using Rev. 08, Rev. 09, Rev. 10, Rev. 11, or Rev. 12 of the National HVAC Design Report would, by definition, meet the requirements of Rev. 13.</p> <p>Therefore, previously collected Rev. 08, Rev. 09, Rev. 10, Rev. 11, or Rev. 12 National HVAC Design Reports will be permitted to be used after the release of the next Revision of the program requirements, so long as no aspect of the building design changes. For building designs that are not identical to prior designs (e.g., due to new equipment that is rated in SEER2 instead of SEER), then a new HVAC Design Report must be completed and collected.</p> <p>To reflect this change, Footnote 12 will be updated as follows:</p> <p><u>“Homes certified under Rev. 123 of the program requirements are permitted to use either any Revision of the National HVAC Design Report between Rev. 08, 09, 10, 11, or 12 and Rev. 13 of the National HVAC Design Report.”</u></p>
01216	05/01/2023	Florida Program Requirements (Version 3.1, Rev. 12)	Clarification	<p>Eligibility Requirements Section – Only detached, not attached, Dwellings are eligible to participate</p> <p>Issue: Partners have asked whether only detached Dwellings are eligible to be certified using the Single-Family New Homes (SFNH) program, or if attached Dwellings may also be certified.</p> <p>The Eligibility Requirements state that Dwellings (e.g., single-family homes and duplexes) and Townhouses may be certified using the Single-Family New Homes program. In contrast to Townhouses, which are explicitly defined as attached structures, the definition of Dwelling does not distinguish between detached and attached structures: “..any building that contains one or two Dwelling Units used, intended, or designed to be built, used, rented, leased, let or hired out to be occupied, or that are occupied for living purposes.”</p> <p>Through the examples of Dwellings that are listed (single-family homes and duplexes), however, EPA intended to convey that only detached structures are eligible to be certified using the SFNH program.</p>

Current ENERGY STAR Single-Family New Homes Policy Record

				<p>Resolution: To reinforce the original intent of the scope of the SFNH program, the Eligibility Requirements will be revised as follows:</p> <p>“Site-built or modular <u>detached</u> Dwellings (e.g., single-family homes and duplexes) and Townhouses are eligible to participate in the ENERGY STAR Single-Family New Homes (SFNH) program.”</p>
01318	12/01/2023	Florida Program Requirements (Version 3.1, Rev. 12)	Clarification	<p>Eligibility Requirements Section – Link to new program document defining applicable program requirements, including the minimum Version and Revision, to which a home is eligible to be certified</p> <p>Issue: The Eligibility Requirements Section defines what types of homes are eligible to participate in the SFNH program. However, it does not define the applicable program requirements, including the minimum version and revision, to which a home in a particular location is eligible to be certified. This is currently defined in the Effective Date Section of the same program document. Combining the two sections, such that all requirements related to eligibility are located in a single section, would be clearer.</p> <p>Furthermore, the current Effective Date Section lacks, or only implies, certain information that would be clearer if stated explicitly, including: a) expanding the table to include which program version(s) are applicable to homes in all locations; b) expanding the table to include, where applicable, both the national version and regional version of the program requirements to which a home is eligible to be certified; and c) a statement that the listed versions are the minimum required; therefore, homes are eligible to be certified to higher versions of the same program.</p> <p>Resolution: To more clearly convey all eligibility requirements, the Effective Date Section, as well as Footnote 13, 14 and 15, will be deleted and the following sentence will be added to the Eligibility Requirements Section:</p> <p><u>“To determine the applicable SFNH program requirements, including the minimum Version and Revision, to which a home is eligible to be certified, visit www.energystar.gov/SFNHVersions.”</u></p> <p>The new program document linked to in the sentence above will contain the applicable program requirements, including the minimum Version and Revision, for all locations; will include, where applicable, both the national version and regional version of the program requirements to which a home is eligible to be certified; and will state that the listed versions are the minimum required; therefore, homes are eligible to be certified to higher versions of the same program.</p>

Current ENERGY STAR Single-Family New Homes Policy Record

01227	05/01/2023	Florida Program Requirements (Version 3.1, Rev. 12)	Clarification	ENERGY STAR Certification Process Section - Pre-drywall inspection is always required
				<p>Issue: Partners have periodically asked if there are alternative verification protocols available when a builder installs drywall before a home has had a pre-drywall inspection by the Rater.</p> <p>Step 4 of the ENERGY STAR Certification Process states that “the Rater must review all items on the National Rater checklists.. In the event that an item on a National Rater checklist cannot be inspected by the Rater, the home also cannot earn the ENERGY STAR.”</p> <p>In addition, ANSI / RESNET / ICC 301 requires visual inspection of multiple Minimum Rated Features per Normative Appendix B, including framing members and wall insulation installation, which cannot be completed if the features are concealed.</p> <p>Given these current policies, the only recourse when drywall has been installed prior to visual verification is to remove the drywall to allow the inspection of Minimum Rated Features of ANSI / RESNET / ICC 301 as well as the mandatory features of the ENERGY STAR Single-Family New Homes program (e.g. minimum insulation levels, Grade I or II insulation, air sealing details, a complete air barrier, advanced framing details, and ductwork installed without kinks and bends). No alternative protocol has been identified that will deliver the same certainty as a pre-drywall inspection that all program requirements have been met.</p>
				<p>Resolution: To reinforce EPA’s current policy that a pre-drywall inspection is always required, and that drywall must be entirely removed to fully verify all Items if it has been installed prior to the inspection, Step 4 will be revised as follows:</p> <p>“Using a Rater, verify that all requirements have been met in accordance with the Mandatory Requirements for All Certified Homes and with the inspection procedures for minimum rated features in ANSI / RESNET / ICC 301, Appendix B. <u>This will require a minimum of two inspections: one at pre-drywall and the other at final.</u>”</p>
01303	12/01/2023	Florida Program Requirements (Version 3.1, Rev. 12)	Change	ENERGY STAR Certification Process – Sunset of sampling protocols
				<p>Issue: In July 2023, EPA held a stakeholder feedback period for a proposed sunset of sampling for the ENERGY STAR Single-Family New Homes (SFNH) program and for all townhouses.</p> <p>When first conceived, the sampling allowance was designed, in part, to broaden the reach of the ENERGY STAR program. Today, however, the use of sampling is prevalent only in a single</p>

Current ENERGY STAR Single-Family New Homes Policy Record

				<p>market (Arizona), and outside of that state, more than 95% of single-family certifications in 2022 were based on individual inspections of each home.</p> <p>Because the data indicate that the national market at large has moved to individual inspections of homes, EPA believes it is appropriate to sunset the use of sampling for the ENERGY STAR Single-Family New Homes program.</p> <p>To provide greater assurance that all program requirements have been met in every certified home, EPA proposed to sunset the allowance to use sampling inspection protocols in the ENERGY STAR Single-Family New Homes program for homes permitted on or after 01/01/2025.</p> <p>Further, townhouses were proposed to not be allowed to use sampling inspection protocols, even when certified using the ENERGY STAR Multifamily New Construction (MFNC) program. However, all other building types eligible to be certified using the ENERGY STAR MFNC program would continue to be permitted to use sampling inspection protocols.</p> <p>EPA posted a response to comments and a finalized policy announcement in alignment with the proposal in the Fall of 2023.</p>
				<p>Resolution: To reflect the sunset of the allowance to use sampling inspection protocols in the ENERGY STAR Single-Family New Homes program for homes permitted on or after 01/01/2025, the following sentence will be added to Step 4 of the ENERGY STAR Certification Process:</p> <p>“Using a Rater, verify that all requirements have been met in accordance with the Mandatory Requirements for All Certified Homes and with the inspection procedures for minimum rated features in ANSI / RESNET / ICC 301, Appendix B. <u>All items shall be verified for each certified home and sampling protocols shall not be used.</u>”</p> <p>In addition, Footnote 10, which included the allowance to use sampling, will be deleted.</p>
01279	12/01/2023	Florida Program Requirements (Version 3.1, Rev. 12)	Clarification	<p>ENERGY STAR Certification Process Section – Raters are to verify that items have been met within program-defined tolerances; not use discretion to discern intent of items</p> <p>Issue: The Certification Process Section contains statements regarding the verification of items on the program checklists that may incorrectly imply that Raters have the authority to interpret program intent, potentially leading to inconsistent implementation of the program requirements. Instead, it is the responsibility of EPA to ensure that each program requirement is sufficiently clear that all Raters can implement that policy consistently.</p>

Current ENERGY STAR Single-Family New Homes Policy Record

				<p>Rather, the purpose of these statements was to clarify that minor deviations from a stated program requirement may be acceptable. Since the time that this language was first drafted, EPA has worked to define quantitative tolerances (e.g., Rater-measured ventilation rate must be within either ± 15 CFM or $\pm 15\%$ of design report value) to more clearly define how much variation is acceptable.</p> <p>Resolution: To better convey that Raters are to verify that checklist items have been met within program-defined tolerances, the following edits will be made to the Certification Process section:</p> <p>“The Rater must review all items on the National Rater checklists. Raters are expected to use their experience and discretion to verify that the overall intent of each inspection checklist item has been met within program-defined tolerances (i.e., identifying major defects that undermine the intent of the checklist item versus identifying minor defects that the Rater may deem acceptable).”</p> <p>In the event that a Rater determines that a program requirement has not been met <u>finds an item that is inconsistent with the intent of the checklists</u>, the home cannot earn the ENERGY STAR until the item is corrected...</p> <p>In the event that a Rater is not able to determine whether <u>a program requirement has been met</u> an item is consistent with the intent (e.g., an alternative method of meeting a checklist requirement has been proposed), then the Rater shall consult their Provider.</p> <p>If EPA believes the current program requirements are sufficiently clear to determine whether the <u>item in question</u> intent has been met, then this guidance will be provided to the partner and enforced beginning with the house in question.”</p> <p>In addition, the following minor edit will be made to Footnote 5 for consistency:</p> <p>“Certification shall only be allowed if the Rater has determined that no equivalent option is available that could meet the intent of the conflicting requirement (e.g., switching from exterior to interior slab edge insulation).”</p>
01238	12/01/2023	Florida Program Requirements (Version 3.1, Rev. 12)	Refinement	<p>Exhibit 1 – Removal of EER for cooling and heating equipment</p> <p>Issue: Exhibit 1 includes an EER value for certain heat pumps, which may imply that such values must be met for a home to be certified. However, in practice, there is no requirement that equipment meet this level of efficiency. EER is not included in the ENERGY STAR Reference Design in the ERI Target Procedure. Furthermore, for air conditioners and air-source heat pumps, EER is not a minimum rated feature in ANSI / RESNET / ICC 301, the standard that underlies the performance target. As a result, such an input would not impact the</p>

Current ENERGY STAR Single-Family New Homes Policy Record

				<p>performance of the home. For these reasons, displaying EER in this Exhibit could cause confusion for partners.</p> <p>Additionally, the Multifamily New Construction Program will be removing all instances of EER requirements for air-source heat pumps and air conditioners in the corresponding Exhibit for that program, so making the same edit for the Single-Family New Homes program would improve consistency.</p>
				<p>Resolution: For improved consistency and clarity, all instances of EER values for air-source heat pumps in Exhibit 1 will be removed. For example, the following edit will be made to the Heating Equipment section:</p> <p>“8.2 HSPF / 15 SEER /12 EERair-source w/ electric or dual-fuel backup”</p>
01245	12/01/2023	Florida Program Requirements (Version 3.1, Rev. 12)	Refinement	Exhibit 2 – HVAC contractor may be required to provide documentation in Track A
				<p>Issue: This Exhibit lists the mandatory requirements for all certified homes. For the HVAC Installing Contractor, it states the following:</p> <p>“None. While the HVAC contractor plays a critical role in properly installing and commissioning a system, the Rater is the party responsible for assessing its installation quality in accordance with ANSI / RESNET / ACCA / ICC 310.”</p> <p>While HVAC contractors are not required to complete any program checklists, Partners have noted that the HVAC contractor is required in some cases to provide documentation to the Rater to support their assessment, most notably regarding the refrigerant system when the Weigh-In Method of ANSI / RESNET / ACCA / ICC 310 is used. The current language may create confusion by implying that they have no role in supporting the Rater’s assessment.</p>
				<p>Resolution: To reduce potential confusion, the language will be revised as follows:</p> <p>“None. While the HVAC contractor plays a critical role in properly installing and commissioning a system, the Rater is the party responsible for assessing its installation quality in accordance with, per ANSI / RESNET / ACCA / ICC 310. However, the installing contractor may be required to provide documentation to support the Rater’s assessment (e.g., regarding the refrigerant system).”</p>
01272	12/01/2023	Florida Program Requirements	Change	Exhibit 3 – Removal of Provider discretion to define ‘Permit Date’ and addition of allowance to use Rater’s first site visit

Current ENERGY STAR Single-Family New Homes Policy Record

		(Version 3.1, Rev. 12)		<p>Issue: Exhibit 3 defines which Versions and Revisions are required to be used and is dependent, in part, on the permit date of homes. A footnote associated with this exhibit delineates the various ways that the permit date can be determined and includes an allowance for Providers to use their discretion when determining it. The allowance to use discretion may result in inconsistent implementation of the program requirements.</p> <p>Resolution: To ensure more consistent implementation of the program requirements, the allowance to use Provider discretion to define 'permit date' will be removed. At the same time, an additional alternative to 'permit date' that is commonly used in the industry and results in a more conservative (i.e., later) permit date will be added, based on the date of the Rater's first inspection. Another commonly used alternative in the industry, based on the permit application date, will not be added to the program because this could result in a less conservative (i.e., earlier) permit date than the program currently allows.</p> <p>As a result, the following edits will be made to Footnote 13:</p> <p>"The Rater may define the 'permit date' as either is the date on which that the permit authorizing construction of the building was issued. Alternatively, the date of the Rater's first site visit or the date of the contract on the home is allowed to be used as the 'permit date'. The permit application date is not allowed to be used. In cases where permit or contract dates are not available, Providers have discretion to estimate permit dates based on other construction schedule factors. These assumptions should be both defensible and documented."</p>
01291	12/01/2023	Florida Program Requirements (Version 3.1, Rev. 12)	Change	<p>Footnote 15: Continued use of Rev. 08, 09, 10, 11 and 12 HVAC Design Report</p> <p>Issue: Due to the effort required to collect the HVAC Design Report, partners have asked whether previously collected Rev. 08, Rev. 09, Rev. 10, Rev. 11 and Rev. 12 HVAC Design Reports can continue to be used after the release of the next Revision of the program requirements, so long as no aspect of the system design changes.</p> <p>Resolution: Because the next Revision of the program checklists will not require collection of any additional information or impose any new requirements, and will maintain or increase compliance tolerances, a design documented using Rev. 08, Rev. 09, Rev. 10, Rev. 11, or Rev. 12 of the National HVAC Design Report would, by definition, meet the requirements of Rev. 13.</p> <p>Therefore, previously collected Rev. 08, Rev. 09, Rev. 10, Rev. 11, or Rev. 12 National HVAC Design Reports will be permitted to be used after the release of the next Revision of the program requirements, so long as no aspect of the building design changes. For building</p>

Current ENERGY STAR Single-Family New Homes Policy Record

				<p>designs that are not identical to prior designs (e.g., due to new equipment that is rated in SEER2 instead of SEER), then a new HVAC Design Report must be completed and collected.</p> <p>To reflect this change, Footnote 15 will be updated as follows:</p> <p>“Homes certified under Rev. 123 of the program requirements are permitted to use either <u>any Revision of the National HVAC Design Report between Rev. 08, 09, 10, 11, or 12 and Rev. 13 of the National HVAC Design Report.</u>”</p>
01310	12/01/2023	Florida ERI Target Procedure (Version 3.1, Rev. 12)	Clarification	<p>Lighting, Appliances, & Internal Gains Section – Number of ceiling fans aligned with logic in ANSI / RESNET / ICC 301</p>
				<p>Issue: A partner has asked for clarification about the number of ceiling fans the ENERGY STAR Reference Design is intended to have.</p> <p>For context, ANSI / RESNET / ICC 301-2019 requires ceiling fans to be equal in number for both the reference and rated homes. However, if the number of ceiling fans present in the rated home is not at least equal to the number of bedrooms plus one, then neither home is modeled with ceiling fans.</p> <p>The Florida ERI Target Procedure was intended to apply the same logic. However, it states that the quantity of ceiling fans shall be equal to the number of bedrooms plus one “when ceiling fans are present in the Rated Home”. The partner is unclear whether the ENERGY STAR Reference Design should be configured with ceiling fans when any ceiling fans are present in the Rated Home, or only in cases where the Rated Home has a quantity at least equal to the number of bedrooms plus one. The latter interpretation was the intent.</p>
				<p>Resolution: To clarify this intent, the language in the ‘Lighting, Appliances, & Internal Gains’ Section will be revised as follows:</p> <p>“Ceiling Fan: 122 CFM per Watt; Quantity = <u>Same as Rated Home per ANSI / RESNET / ICC 301, either 0 or</u> Number of bedrooms + 1 when ceiling fans present in the Rated Home; otherwise Quantity = 0”</p>
01207	11/10/2022	Florida ERI Target Procedure (Version 3.1, Rev. 12)	Change	<p>Exhibit 1 – ENERGY STAR Reference Design configured without on-site power</p>
				<p>Issue: Partners have asked whether the ENERGY STAR Reference Design (ESRD) should be configured with On-Site Power Production (OPP) if such a system is present in the Rated Home. Because OPP is not one of the building components listed in the Expanded ENERGY STAR Reference Design Definition Exhibit and the document contains a footnote stating that</p>

Current ENERGY STAR Single-Family New Homes Policy Record

				<p>“Any parameter not specified in this exhibit shall be identical to the value entered for the Rated Home”, one might infer that it is EPA’s intent for the ESRD to be configured with OPP. Such a configuration would create unintended challenges because the related Program Requirements specify that “on-site power generation may not be used to meet the ENERGY STAR ERI Target”.</p> <p>Resolution: It is not EPA’s intent to make the ENERGY STAR ERI Target more stringent in cases where the Rated Home has OPP. To align the ENERGY STAR ERI Target Procedure with EPA’s intent, a new row will be added to the end of the ENERGY STAR Reference Design Definition Exhibit with the Building Component listed as “On-Site Power Production” and the Definition listed as “None”.</p>
01223	05/01/2023	Oregon and Washington Program Requirements (Version 3.2, Rev. 12)	Clarification	<p>Eligibility Requirements Section – Only detached, not attached, Dwellings are eligible to participate</p> <p>Issue: Partners have asked whether only detached Dwellings are eligible to be certified using the Single-Family New Homes (SFNH) program, or if attached Dwellings may also be certified.</p> <p>The Eligibility Requirements state that Dwellings (e.g., single-family homes and duplexes) and Townhouses may be certified using the Single-Family New Homes program. In contrast to Townhouses, which are explicitly defined as attached structures, the definition of Dwelling does not distinguish between detached and attached structures: “..any building that contains one or two Dwelling Units used, intended, or designed to be built, used, rented, leased, let or hired out to be occupied, or that are occupied for living purposes.”</p> <p>Through the examples of Dwellings that are listed (single-family homes and duplexes), however, EPA intended to convey that only detached structures are eligible to be certified using the SFNH program.</p> <p>Resolution: To reinforce the original intent of the scope of the SFNH program, the Eligibility Requirements will be revised as follows:</p> <p>“Site-built or modular <u>detached</u> Dwellings (e.g., single-family homes and duplexes) and Townhouses are eligible to participate in the ENERGY STAR Single-Family New Homes (SFNH) program.”</p>

Current ENERGY STAR Single-Family New Homes Policy Record

01319	12/01/2023	Oregon and Washington Program Requirements (Version 3.2, Rev. 12)	Clarification	Eligibility Requirements Section – Link to new program document defining applicable program requirements, including the minimum Version and Revision, to which a home is eligible to be certified
				<p>Issue: The Eligibility Requirements Section defines what types of homes are eligible to participate in the SFNH program. However, it does not define the applicable program requirements, including the minimum version and revision, to which a home in a particular location is eligible to be certified. This is currently defined in the Effective Date Section of the same program document. Combining the two sections, such that all requirements related to eligibility are located in a single section, would be clearer.</p> <p>Furthermore, the current Effective Date Section lacks, or only implies, certain information that would be clearer if stated explicitly, including: a) expanding the table to include which program version(s) are applicable to homes in all locations; b) expanding the table to include, where applicable, both the national version and regional version of the program requirements to which a home is eligible to be certified; and c) a statement that the listed versions are the minimum required; therefore, homes are eligible to be certified to higher versions of the same program.</p>
				<p>Resolution: To more clearly convey all eligibility requirements, the Effective Date Section, as well as Footnote 14 and 15, will be deleted and the following sentence will be added to the Eligibility Requirements Section:</p> <p><u>“To determine the applicable SFNH program requirements, including the minimum Version and Revision, to which a home is eligible to be certified, visit www.energystar.gov/SFNHVersions.”</u></p> <p>The new program document linked to in the sentence above will contain the applicable program requirements, including the minimum Version and Revision, for all locations; will include, where applicable, both the national version and regional version of the program requirements to which a home is eligible to be certified; and will state that the listed versions are the minimum required; therefore, homes are eligible to be certified to higher versions of the same program.</p>
01228	05/01/2023	Oregon and Washington Program Requirements (Version 3.2, Rev. 12)	Clarification	ENERGY STAR Certification Process Section - Pre-drywall inspection is always required
				<p>Issue: Partners have periodically asked if there are alternative verification protocols available when a builder installs drywall before a home has had a pre-drywall inspection by the Rater.</p>

Current ENERGY STAR Single-Family New Homes Policy Record

				<p>Step 4 of the ENERGY STAR Certification Process states that “the Rater must review all items on the National Rater checklists.. In the event that an item on a National Rater checklist cannot be inspected by the Rater, the home also cannot earn the ENERGY STAR.”</p> <p>In addition, ANSI / RESNET / ICC 301 requires visual inspection of multiple Minimum Rated Features per Normative Appendix B, including framing members and wall insulation installation, which cannot be completed if the features are concealed.</p> <p>Given these current policies, the only recourse when drywall has been installed prior to visual verification is to remove the drywall to allow the inspection of Minimum Rated Features of ANSI / RESNET / ICC 301 as well as the mandatory features of the ENERGY STAR Single-Family New Homes program (e.g. minimum insulation levels, Grade I or II insulation, air sealing details, a complete air barrier, advanced framing details, and ductwork installed without kinks and bends). No alternative protocol has been identified that will deliver the same certainty as a pre-drywall inspection that all program requirements have been met.</p>
				<p>Resolution: To reinforce EPA’s current policy that a pre-drywall inspection is always required, and that drywall must be entirely removed to fully verify all Items if it has been installed prior to the inspection, Step 4 will be revised as follows:</p> <p>“Using a Rater, verify that all requirements have been met in accordance with the Mandatory Requirements for All Certified Homes and with the inspection procedures for minimum rated features in ANSI / RESNET / ICC 301, Appendix B. <u>This will require a minimum of two inspections: one at pre-drywall and the other at final.</u>”</p>
01304	12/01/2023	Oregon and Washington Program Requirements (Version 3.2, Rev. 12)	Change	<p>ENERGY STAR Certification Process – Sunset of sampling protocols</p> <p>Issue: In July 2023, EPA held a stakeholder feedback period for a proposed sunset of sampling for the ENERGY STAR Single-Family New Homes (SFNH) program and for all townhouses.</p> <p>When first conceived, the sampling allowance was designed, in part, to broaden the reach of the ENERGY STAR program. Today, however, the use of sampling is prevalent only in a single market (Arizona), and outside of that state, more than 95% of single-family certifications in 2022 were based on individual inspections of each home.</p> <p>Because the data indicate that the national market at large has moved to individual inspections of homes, EPA believes it is appropriate to sunset the use of sampling for the ENERGY STAR Single-Family New Homes program.</p> <p>To provide greater assurance that all program requirements have been met in every certified home, EPA proposed to sunset the allowance to use sampling inspection protocols in the</p>

Current ENERGY STAR Single-Family New Homes Policy Record

				<p>ENERGY STAR Single-Family New Homes program for homes permitted on or after 01/01/2025.</p> <p>Further, townhouses were proposed to not be allowed to use sampling inspection protocols, even when certified using the ENERGY STAR Multifamily New Construction (MFNC) program. However, all other building types eligible to be certified using the ENERGY STAR MFNC program would continue to be permitted to use sampling inspection protocols.</p> <p>EPA posted a response to comments and a finalized policy announcement in alignment with the proposal in the Fall of 2023.</p>
				<p>Resolution: To reflect the sunset of the allowance to use sampling inspection protocols in the ENERGY STAR Single-Family New Homes program for homes permitted on or after 01/01/2025, the following sentence will be added to Step 4 of the ENERGY STAR Certification Process:</p> <p>“Using a Rater, verify that all requirements have been met in accordance with the Mandatory Requirements for All Certified Homes and with the inspection procedures for minimum rated features in ANSI / RESNET / ICC 301, Appendix B. <u>All items shall be verified for each certified home and sampling protocols shall not be used.</u>”</p> <p>In addition, Footnote 10, which included the allowance to use sampling, will be deleted.</p>
01278	12/01/2023	Oregon and Washington Program Requirements (Version 3.2, Rev. 12)	Clarification	<p>ENERGY STAR Certification Process Section – Raters are to verify that items have been met within program-defined tolerances; not use discretion to discern intent of items</p> <p>Issue: The Certification Process Section contains statements regarding the verification of items on the program checklists that may incorrectly imply that Raters have the authority to interpret program intent, potentially leading to inconsistent implementation of the program requirements. Instead, it is the responsibility of EPA to ensure that each program requirement is sufficiently clear that all Raters can implement that policy consistently.</p> <p>Rather, the purpose of these statements was to clarify that minor deviations from a stated program requirement may be acceptable. Since the time that this language was first drafted, EPA has worked to define quantitative tolerances (e.g., Rater-measured ventilation rate must be within either ± 15 CFM or $\pm 15\%$ of design report value) to more clearly define how much variation is acceptable.</p>

Current ENERGY STAR Single-Family New Homes Policy Record

				<p>Resolution: To better convey that Raters are to verify that checklist items have been met within program-defined tolerances, the following edits will be made to the Certification Process section:</p> <p>“The Rater must review all items on the National Rater checklists. Raters are expected to use their experience and discretion to verify that the overall intent of each inspection checklist item has been met within program-defined tolerances (i.e., identifying major defects that undermine the intent of the checklist item versus identifying minor defects that the Rater may deem acceptable).”</p> <p>In the event that a Rater <u>determines that a program requirement has not been met</u> finds an item that is inconsistent with the intent of the checklists, the home cannot earn the ENERGY STAR until the item is corrected...</p> <p>In the event that a Rater is not able to determine whether <u>a program requirement has been met</u> an item is consistent with the intent (e.g., an alternative method of meeting a checklist requirement has been proposed), then the Rater shall consult their Provider.</p> <p>If EPA believes the current program requirements are sufficiently clear to determine whether the <u>item in question</u> intent has been met, then this guidance will be provided to the partner and enforced beginning with the house in question.”</p> <p>In addition, the following minor edit will be made to Footnote 5 for consistency:</p> <p>“Certification shall only be allowed if the Rater has determined that no equivalent option is available that could meet the intent of the conflicting requirement (e.g., switching from exterior to interior slab edge insulation).”</p>
01237	12/01/2023	Oregon and Washington Program Requirements (Version 3.2, Rev. 12)	Refinement	<p>Exhibit 1 – Removal of EER for cooling and heating equipment</p> <p>Issue: Exhibit 1 includes an EER value for certain heat pumps, which may imply that such values must be met for a home to be certified. However, in practice, there is no requirement that equipment meet this level of efficiency. EER is not included in the ENERGY STAR Reference Design in the ERI Target Procedure. Furthermore, for air conditioners and air-source heat pumps, EER is not a minimum rated feature in ANSI / RESNET / ICC 301, the standard that underlies the performance target. As a result, such an input would not impact the performance of the home. For these reasons, displaying EER in this Exhibit could cause confusion for partners.</p> <p>Additionally, the Multifamily New Construction Program will be removing all instances of EER requirements for air-source heat pumps and air conditioners in the corresponding Exhibit for</p>

Current ENERGY STAR Single-Family New Homes Policy Record

				<p>that program, so making the same edit for the Single-Family New Homes program would improve consistency.</p> <p>Resolution: For improved consistency and clarity, all instances of EER values for air-source heat pumps in Exhibit 1 will be removed. For example, the following edit will be made to the Heating Equipment section: “9.5 HSPF / 15 SEER / 12 EER air-source w/ electric or dual-fuel backup”</p>
01246	12/01/2023	Oregon and Washington Program Requirements (Version 3.2, Rev. 12)	Refinement	<p>Exhibit 2 – HVAC contractor may be required to provide documentation in Track A</p> <p>Issue: This Exhibit lists the mandatory requirements for all certified homes. For the HVAC Installing Contractor, it states the following: “None. While the HVAC contractor plays a critical role in properly installing and commissioning a system, the Rater is the party responsible for assessing its installation quality in accordance with ANSI / RESNET / ACCA / ICC 310.” While HVAC contractors are not required to complete any program checklists, Partners have noted that the HVAC contractor is required in some cases to provide documentation to the Rater to support their assessment, most notably regarding the refrigerant system when the Weigh-In Method of ANSI / RESNET / ACCA / ICC 310 is used. The current language may create confusion by implying that they have no role in supporting the Rater’s assessment.</p> <p>Resolution: To reduce potential confusion, the language will be revised as follows: “None. While the HVAC contractor plays a critical role in properly installing and commissioning a system, the Rater is the party responsible for assessing its installation quality in accordance with, per ANSI / RESNET / ACCA / ICC 310. <u>However, the installing contractor may be required to provide documentation to support the Rater’s assessment (e.g., regarding the refrigerant system).</u>”</p>
01273	12/01/2023	Oregon and Washington Program Requirements (Version 3.2, Rev. 12)	Change	<p>Exhibit 3 – Removal of Provider discretion to define ‘Permit Date’ and addition of allowance to use Rater’s first site visit</p> <p>Issue: Exhibit 3 defines which Versions and Revisions are required to be used and is dependent, in part, on the permit date of homes. A footnote associated with this exhibit delineates the various ways that the permit date can be determined and includes an allowance for Providers to use their discretion when determining it. The allowance to use discretion may result in inconsistent implementation of the program requirements.</p>

Current ENERGY STAR Single-Family New Homes Policy Record

				<p>Resolution: To ensure more consistent implementation of the program requirements, the allowance to use Provider discretion to define ‘permit date’ will be removed. At the same time, an additional alternative to ‘permit date’ that is commonly used in the industry and results in a more conservative (i.e., later) permit date will be added, based on the date of the Rater’s first inspection. Another commonly used alternative in the industry, based on the permit application date, will not be added to the program because this could result in a less conservative (i.e., earlier) permit date than the program currently allows.</p> <p>As a result, the following edits will be made to Footnote 14:</p> <p>“The Rater may define the ‘permit date’ as either is the date on which that the permit authorizing construction of the building was issued. Alternatively, the date of the Rater’s first site visit or the date of the contract on the home is allowed to be used as the ‘permit date’. The permit application date is not allowed to be used. In cases where permit or contract dates are not available, Providers have discretion to estimate permit dates based on other construction schedule factors. These assumptions should be both defensible and documented.”</p>
01292	12/01/2023	Oregon and Washington Program Requirements (Version 3.2, Rev. 12)	Change	<p>Footnote 15: Continued use of Rev. 08, 09, 10, 11 and 12 HVAC Design Report</p> <p>Issue: Due to the effort required to collect the HVAC Design Report, partners have asked whether previously collected Rev. 08, Rev. 09, Rev. 10, Rev. 11 and Rev. 12 HVAC Design Reports can continue to be used after the release of the next Revision of the program requirements, so long as no aspect of the system design changes.</p> <p>Resolution: Because the next Revision of the program checklists will not require collection of any additional information or impose any new requirements, and will maintain or increase compliance tolerances, a design documented using Rev. 08, Rev. 09, Rev. 10, Rev. 11, or Rev. 12 of the National HVAC Design Report would, by definition, meet the requirements of Rev. 13.</p> <p>Therefore, previously collected Rev. 08, Rev. 09, Rev. 10, Rev. 11, or Rev. 12 National HVAC Design Reports will be permitted to be used after the release of the next Revision of the program requirements, so long as no aspect of the building design changes. For building designs that are not identical to prior designs (e.g., due to new equipment that is rated in SEER2 instead of SEER), then a new HVAC Design Report must be completed and collected.</p> <p>To reflect this change, Footnote 15 will be updated as follows:</p>

Current ENERGY STAR Single-Family New Homes Policy Record

				<p>“Homes certified under Rev. 123 of the program requirements are permitted to use either <u>any Revision of the National HVAC Design Report between Rev. 08, 09, 10, 11, or 12</u> and Rev. 13 of the National HVAC Design Report.”</p>
01311	12/01/2023	Oregon and Washington ERI Target Procedure (Version 3.2, Rev. 12)	Clarification	<p>Lighting, Appliances, & Internal Gains Section – Number of ceiling fans aligned with logic in ANSI / RESNET / ICC 301</p>
				<p>Issue: A partner has asked for clarification about the number of ceiling fans the ENERGY STAR Reference Design is intended to have.</p> <p>For context, ANSI / RESNET / ICC 301-2019 requires ceiling fans to be equal in number for both the reference and rated homes. However, if the number of ceiling fans present in the rated home is not at least equal to the number of bedrooms plus one, then neither home is modeled with ceiling fans.</p> <p>The Oregon and Washington ERI Target Procedure was intended to apply the same logic. However, it states that the quantity of ceiling fans shall be equal to the number of bedrooms plus one “when ceiling fans are present in the Rated Home”. The partner is unclear whether the ENERGY STAR Reference Design should be configured with ceiling fans when any ceiling fans are present in the Rated Home, or only in cases where the Rated Home has a quantity at least equal to the number of bedrooms plus one. The latter interpretation was the intent.</p>
				<p>Resolution: To clarify this intent, the language in the ‘Lighting, Appliances, & Internal Gains’ Section will be revised as follows:</p> <p>“Ceiling Fan: 122 CFM per Watt; Quantity = <u>Same as Rated Home per ANSI / RESNET / ICC 301, either 0 or Number of bedrooms + 1 when ceiling fans present in the Rated Home; otherwise Quantity = 0</u>”</p>
01208	11/10/2022	Oregon and Washington ERI Target Procedure (Version 3.2, Rev. 12)	Change	<p>Exhibit 1 – ENERGY STAR Reference Design configured without on-site power</p>
				<p>Issue: Partners have asked whether the ENERGY STAR Reference Design (ESRD) should be configured with On-Site Power Production (OPP) if such a system is present in the Rated Home. Because OPP is not one of the building components listed in the Expanded ENERGY STAR Reference Design Definition Exhibit and the document contains a footnote stating that “Any parameter not specified in this exhibit shall be identical to the value entered for the Rated Home”, one might infer that it is EPA’s intent for the ESRD to be configured with OPP.</p>

Current ENERGY STAR Single-Family New Homes Policy Record

				<p>Such a configuration would create unintended challenges because the related Program Requirements specify that “on-site power generation may not be used to meet the ENERGY STAR ERI Target”.</p> <p>Resolution: It is not EPA’s intent to make the ENERGY STAR ERI Target more stringent in cases where the Rated Home has OPP. To align the ENERGY STAR ERI Target Procedure with EPA’s intent, a new row will be added to the end of the ENERGY STAR Reference Design Definition Exhibit with the Building Component listed as “On-Site Power Production” and the Definition listed as “None”.</p>
01220	05/01/2023	Caribbean Program Requirements (Version 3, Rev. 12)	Clarification	<p>Eligibility Requirements Section – Only detached, not attached, Dwellings are eligible to participate</p>
				<p>Issue: Partners have asked whether only detached Dwellings are eligible to be certified using the Single-Family New Homes (SFNH) program, or if attached Dwellings may also be certified.</p> <p>The Eligibility Requirements state that Dwellings (e.g., single-family homes and duplexes) and Townhouses may be certified using the Single-Family New Homes program. In contrast to Townhouses, which are explicitly defined as attached structures, the definition of Dwelling does not distinguish between detached and attached structures: “..any building that contains one or two Dwelling Units used, intended, or designed to be built, used, rented, leased, let or hired out to be occupied, or that are occupied for living purposes.”</p> <p>Through the examples of Dwellings that are listed (single-family homes and duplexes), however, EPA intended to convey that only detached structures are eligible to be certified using the SFNH program.</p>
				<p>Resolution: To reinforce the original intent of the scope of the SFNH program, the Eligibility Requirements will be revised as follows:</p> <p>“Site-built or modular <u>detached</u> Dwellings (e.g., single-family homes and duplexes) and Townhouses are eligible to participate in the ENERGY STAR Single-Family New Homes (SFNH) program.”</p>
01320	12/01/2023	Caribbean Program Requirements (Version 3, Rev. 12)	Clarification	<p>Eligibility Requirements Section – Link to new program document defining applicable program requirements, including the minimum Version and Revision, to which a home is eligible to be certified</p>

Current ENERGY STAR Single-Family New Homes Policy Record

				<p>Issue: The Eligibility Requirements Section defines what types of homes are eligible to participate in the SFNH program. However, it does not define the applicable program requirements, including the minimum version and revision, to which a home in a particular location is eligible to be certified. This is currently defined in the Effective Date Section of the same program document. Combining the two sections, such that all requirements related to eligibility are located in a single section, would be clearer.</p> <p>Furthermore, the current Effective Date Section lacks, or only implies, certain information that would be clearer if stated explicitly, including: a) expanding the table to include which program version(s) are applicable to homes in all locations; b) expanding the table to include, where applicable, both the national version and regional version of the program requirements to which a home is eligible to be certified; and c) a statement that the listed versions are the minimum required; therefore, homes are eligible to be certified to higher versions of the same program.</p>
				<p>Resolution: To more clearly convey all eligibility requirements, the Effective Date Section, as well as Footnote 12 and 13, will be deleted and the following sentence will be added to the Eligibility Requirements Section:</p> <p><u>“To determine the applicable SFNH program requirements, including the minimum Version and Revision, to which a home is eligible to be certified, visit www.energystar.gov/SFNHVersions.”</u></p> <p>The new program document linked to in the sentence above will contain the applicable program requirements, including the minimum Version and Revision, for all locations; will include, where applicable, both the national version and regional version of the program requirements to which a home is eligible to be certified; and will state that the listed versions are the minimum required; therefore, homes are eligible to be certified to higher versions of the same program.</p>
01232	05/01/2023	Caribbean Program Requirements (Version 3, Rev. 12)	Clarification	<p>ENERGY STAR Certification Process Section - Pre-drywall inspection is always required</p> <p>Issue: Partners have periodically asked if there are alternative verification protocols available when a builder installs drywall before a home has had a pre-drywall inspection by the Rater.</p> <p>Step 3 of the ENERGY STAR Certification Process states that “the Rater must review all items on the Caribbean and Pacific Rater checklists.. In the event that an item on a Caribbean and Pacific Rater checklist cannot be inspected by the Rater, the home also cannot earn the ENERGY STAR.”</p>

Current ENERGY STAR Single-Family New Homes Policy Record

				<p>In addition, ANSI / RESNET / ICC 301 requires visual inspection of multiple Minimum Rated Features per Normative Appendix B, including framing members and wall insulation installation, which cannot be completed if the features are concealed.</p> <p>Given these current policies, the only recourse when drywall has been installed prior to visual verification is to remove the drywall to allow the inspection of Minimum Rated Features of ANSI / RESNET / ICC 301 as well as the mandatory features of the ENERGY STAR Single-Family New Homes program (e.g. minimum insulation levels, air sealing details, and ductwork installed without kinks and bends). No alternative protocol has been identified that will deliver the same certainty as a pre-drywall inspection that all program requirements have been met.</p>
				<p>Resolution: To reinforce EPA’s current policy that a pre-drywall inspection is always required if drywall is to be installed, and that drywall must be entirely removed to fully verify all Items if it has been installed prior to the inspection, Step 3 will be revised as follows:</p> <p>“Using a Rater, verify that all requirements have been met in accordance with the Mandatory Requirements for All Certified Homes and with the inspection procedures for minimum rated features in ANSI / RESNET / ICC 301, Appendix B. <u>If drywall will be installed, this will require a minimum of two inspections: one at pre-drywall and the other at final.</u>”</p>
01305	12/01/2023	Caribbean Program Requirements (Version 3, Rev. 12)	Change	<p>ENERGY STAR Certification Process – Sunset of sampling protocols</p> <p>Issue: In July 2023, EPA held a stakeholder feedback period for a proposed sunset of sampling for the ENERGY STAR Single-Family New Homes (SFNH) program and for all townhouses.</p> <p>When first conceived, the sampling allowance was designed, in part, to broaden the reach of the ENERGY STAR program. Today, however, the use of sampling is prevalent only in a single market (Arizona), and outside of that state, more than 95% of single-family certifications in 2022 were based on individual inspections of each home.</p> <p>Because the data indicate that the national market at large has moved to individual inspections of homes, EPA believes it is appropriate to sunset the use of sampling for the ENERGY STAR Single-Family New Homes program.</p> <p>To provide greater assurance that all program requirements have been met in every certified home, EPA proposed to sunset the allowance to use sampling inspection protocols in the</p>

Current ENERGY STAR Single-Family New Homes Policy Record

				<p>ENERGY STAR Single-Family New Homes program for homes permitted on or after 01/01/2025.</p> <p>Further, townhouses were proposed to not be allowed to use sampling inspection protocols, even when certified using the ENERGY STAR Multifamily New Construction (MFNC) program. However, all other building types eligible to be certified using the ENERGY STAR MFNC program would continue to be permitted to use sampling inspection protocols.</p> <p>EPA posted a response to comments and a finalized policy announcement in alignment with the proposal in the Fall of 2023.</p>
				<p>Resolution: To reflect the sunset of the allowance to use sampling inspection protocols in the ENERGY STAR Single-Family New Homes program for homes permitted on or after 01/01/2025, the following sentence will be added to Step 3 of the ENERGY STAR Certification Process:</p> <p>“Using a Rater, verify that all requirements have been met in accordance with the Mandatory Requirements for All Certified Homes and with the inspection procedures for minimum rated features in ANSI / RESNET / ICC 301, Appendix B. <u>All items shall be verified for each certified home and sampling protocols shall not be used.</u>”</p> <p>In addition, Footnote 9, which included the allowance to use sampling, will be deleted.</p>
01277	12/01/2023	Caribbean Program Requirements (Version 3, Rev. 12)	Clarification	<p>ENERGY STAR Certification Process Section – Raters are to verify that items have been met within program-defined tolerances; not use discretion to discern intent of items</p> <p>Issue: The Certification Process Section contains statements regarding the verification of items on the program checklists that may incorrectly imply that Raters have the authority to interpret program intent, potentially leading to inconsistent implementation of the program requirements. Instead, it is the responsibility of EPA to ensure that each program requirement is sufficiently clear that all Raters can implement that policy consistently.</p> <p>Rather, the purpose of these statements was to clarify that minor deviations from a stated program requirement may be acceptable. Since the time that this language was first drafted, EPA has worked to define quantitative tolerances (e.g., Rater-measured ventilation rate must be within either ± 15 CFM or $\pm 15\%$ of design report value) to more clearly define how much variation is acceptable.</p>

Current ENERGY STAR Single-Family New Homes Policy Record

				<p>Resolution: To better convey that Raters are to verify that checklist items have been met within program-defined tolerances, the following edits will be made to the Certification Process section:</p> <p>“The Rater must review all items on the Caribbean and Pacific Rater checklists. Raters are expected to use their experience and discretion to verify that the overall intent of each inspection checklist item has been met within program-defined tolerances (i.e., identifying major defects that undermine the intent of the checklist item versus identifying minor defects that the Rater may deem acceptable).”</p> <p>In the event that a Rater <u>determines that a program requirement has not been met</u> finds an item that is inconsistent with the intent of the checklists, the home cannot earn the ENERGY STAR until the item is corrected...</p> <p>In the event that a Rater is not able to determine whether <u>a program requirement has been met</u> an item is consistent with the intent (e.g., an alternative method of meeting a checklist requirement has been proposed), then the Rater shall consult their Provider.</p> <p>If EPA believes the current program requirements are sufficiently clear to determine whether the <u>item in question</u> intent has been met, then this guidance will be provided to the partner and enforced beginning with the house in question.”</p> <p>In addition, the following minor edit will be made to Footnote 5 for consistency:</p> <p>“Certification shall only be allowed if the Rater has determined that no equivalent option is available that could meet the intent of the conflicting requirement (e.g., switching from exterior to interior slab edge insulation).”</p>
01274	12/01/2023	Caribbean Program Requirements (Version 3, Rev. 12)	Change	<p>Exhibit 3 – Removal of Provider discretion to define ‘Permit Date’ and addition of allowance to use Rater’s first site visit</p> <p>Issue: Exhibit 3 defines which Versions and Revisions are required to be used and is dependent, in part, on the permit date of homes. A footnote associated with this exhibit delineates the various ways that the permit date can be determined and includes an allowance for Providers to use their discretion when determining it. The allowance to use discretion may result in inconsistent implementation of the program requirements.</p> <p>Resolution: To ensure more consistent implementation of the program requirements, the allowance to use Provider discretion to define ‘permit date’ will be removed. At the same time, an additional alternative to ‘permit date’ that is commonly used in the industry and results in a more conservative (i.e., later) permit date will be added, based on the date of the Rater’s first</p>

Current ENERGY STAR Single-Family New Homes Policy Record

				<p>inspection. Another commonly used alternative in the industry, based on the permit application date, will not be added to the program because this could result in a less conservative (i.e., earlier) permit date than the program currently allows.</p> <p>As a result, the following edits will be made to Footnote 12:</p> <p>“The Rater may define the ‘permit date’ as either is the date on which that the permit authorizing construction of the building was issued. Alternatively, the date of the Rater’s first site visit or the date of the contract on the home is allowed to be used as the ‘permit date’. The permit application date is not allowed to be used. In cases where permit or contract dates are not available, Providers have discretion to estimate permit dates based on other construction schedule factors. These assumptions should be both defensible and documented.”</p>
01293	12/01/2023	Caribbean Program Requirements (Version 3, Rev. 12)	Change	<p>Footnote 13: Continued use of Rev. 08, 09, 10, 11 and 12 HVAC Design Report</p>
				<p>Issue: Due to the effort required to collect the HVAC Design Report, partners have asked whether previously collected Rev. 08, Rev. 09, Rev. 10, Rev. 11 and Rev. 12 HVAC Design Reports can continue to be used after the release of the next Revision of the program requirements, so long as no aspect of the system design changes.</p>
				<p>Resolution: Because the next Revision of the program checklists will not require collection of any additional information or impose any new requirements, and will maintain or increase compliance tolerances, a design documented using Rev. 08, Rev. 09, Rev. 10, Rev. 11, or Rev. 12 of the National HVAC Design Report would, by definition, meet the requirements of Rev. 13.</p> <p>Therefore, previously collected Rev. 08, Rev. 09, Rev. 10, Rev. 11, or Rev. 12 National HVAC Design Reports will be permitted to be used after the release of the next Revision of the program requirements, so long as no aspect of the building design changes. For building designs that are not identical to prior designs (e.g., due to new equipment that is rated in SEER2 instead of SEER), then a new HVAC Design Report must be completed and collected.</p> <p>To reflect this change, Footnote 13 will be updated as follows:</p> <p>“Homes certified under Rev. 123 of the program requirements are permitted to use either any Revision of the National HVAC Design Report between Rev. 08, 09, 10, 11, or 12 and Rev. 13 of the National HVAC Design Report.”</p>
01221	05/01/2023	Pacific Program Requirements (Version 3, Rev. 12)	Clarification	<p>Eligibility Requirements Section – Only detached, not attached, Dwellings are eligible to participate</p>

Current ENERGY STAR Single-Family New Homes Policy Record

				<p>Issue: Partners have asked whether only detached Dwellings are eligible to be certified using the Single-Family New Homes (SFNH) program, or if attached Dwellings may also be certified.</p> <p>The Eligibility Requirements state that Dwellings (e.g., single-family homes and duplexes) and Townhouses may be certified using the Single-Family New Homes program. In contrast to Townhouses, which are explicitly defined as attached structures, the definition of Dwelling does not distinguish between detached and attached structures: “..any building that contains one or two Dwelling Units used, intended, or designed to be built, used, rented, leased, let or hired out to be occupied, or that are occupied for living purposes.”</p> <p>Through the examples of Dwellings that are listed (single-family homes and duplexes), however, EPA intended to convey that only detached structures are eligible to be certified using the SFNH program.</p>
				<p>Resolution: To reinforce the original intent of the scope of the SFNH program, the Eligibility Requirements will be revised as follows:</p> <p>“Site-built or modular <u>detached</u> Dwellings (e.g., single-family homes and duplexes) and Townhouses are eligible to participate in the ENERGY STAR Single-Family New Homes (SFNH) program.”</p>
01321	12/01/2023	Pacific Program Requirements (Version 3, Rev. 12)	Clarification	<p>Eligibility Requirements Section – Link to new program document defining applicable program requirements, including the minimum Version and Revision, to which a home is eligible to be certified</p> <p>Issue: The Eligibility Requirements Section defines what types of homes are eligible to participate in the SFNH program. However, it does not define the applicable program requirements, including the minimum version and revision, to which a home in a particular location is eligible to be certified. This is currently defined in the Effective Date Section of the same program document. Combining the two sections, such that all requirements related to eligibility are located in a single section, would be clearer.</p> <p>Furthermore, the current Effective Date Section lacks, or only implies, certain information that would be clearer if stated explicitly, including: a) expanding the table to include which program version(s) are applicable to homes in all locations; b) expanding the table to include, where applicable, both the national version and regional version of the program requirements to which a home is eligible to be certified; and c) a statement that the listed versions are the minimum required; therefore, homes are eligible to be certified to higher versions of the same program.</p>

Current ENERGY STAR Single-Family New Homes Policy Record

				<p>Resolution: To more clearly convey all eligibility requirements, the Effective Date Section, as well as Footnote 15 and 16, will be deleted and the following sentence will be added to the Eligibility Requirements Section:</p> <p><u>“To determine the applicable SFNH program requirements, including the minimum Version and Revision, to which a home is eligible to be certified, visit www.energystar.gov/SFNHVersions.”</u></p> <p>The new program document linked to in the sentence above will contain the applicable program requirements, including the minimum Version and Revision, for all locations; will include, where applicable, both the national version and regional version of the program requirements to which a home is eligible to be certified; and will state that the listed versions are the minimum required; therefore, homes are eligible to be certified to higher versions of the same program.</p>
01233	05/01/2023	Pacific Program Requirements (Version 3, Rev. 12)	Clarification	<p>ENERGY STAR Certification Process Section - Pre-drywall inspection is always required</p> <p>Issue: Partners have periodically asked if there are alternative verification protocols available when a builder installs drywall before a home has had a pre-drywall inspection by the Rater.</p> <p>Step 4 of the ENERGY STAR Certification Process states that “the Rater must review all items on the Caribbean and Pacific Rater checklists.. In the event that an item on a Caribbean and Pacific Rater checklist cannot be inspected by the Rater, the home also cannot earn the ENERGY STAR.”</p> <p>In addition, ANSI / RESNET / ICC 301 requires visual inspection of multiple Minimum Rated Features per Normative Appendix B, including framing members and wall insulation installation, which cannot be completed if the features are concealed.</p> <p>Given these current policies, the only recourse when drywall has been installed prior to visual verification is to remove the drywall to allow the inspection of Minimum Rated Features of ANSI / RESNET / ICC 301 as well as the mandatory features of the ENERGY STAR Single-Family New Homes program (e.g. minimum insulation levels, air sealing details, and ductwork installed without kinks and bends). No alternative protocol has been identified that will deliver the same certainty as a pre-drywall inspection that all program requirements have been met.</p> <p>Resolution: To reinforce EPA’s current policy that a pre-drywall inspection is always required if drywall is to be installed, and that drywall must be entirely removed to fully verify all Items if it has been installed prior to the inspection, Step 4 will be revised as follows:</p>

Current ENERGY STAR Single-Family New Homes Policy Record

				<p>“Using a Rater, verify that all requirements have been met in accordance with the Mandatory Requirements for All Certified Homes and with the inspection procedures for minimum rated features in ANSI / RESNET / ICC 301, Appendix B. <u>If drywall will be installed, this will require a minimum of two inspections: one at pre-drywall and the other at final.</u>”</p>
01306	12/01/2023	Pacific Program Requirements (Version 3, Rev. 12)	Change	<p>ENERGY STAR Certification Process – Sunset of sampling protocols</p>
				<p>Issue: In July 2023, EPA held a stakeholder feedback period for a proposed sunset of sampling for the ENERGY STAR Single-Family New Homes (SFNH) program and for all townhouses.</p> <p>When first conceived, the sampling allowance was designed, in part, to broaden the reach of the ENERGY STAR program. Today, however, the use of sampling is prevalent only in a single market (Arizona), and outside of that state, more than 95% of single-family certifications in 2022 were based on individual inspections of each home.</p> <p>Because the data indicate that the national market at large has moved to individual inspections of homes, EPA believes it is appropriate to sunset the use of sampling for the ENERGY STAR Single-Family New Homes program.</p> <p>To provide greater assurance that all program requirements have been met in every certified home, EPA proposed to sunset the allowance to use sampling inspection protocols in the ENERGY STAR Single-Family New Homes program for homes permitted on or after 01/01/2025.</p> <p>Further, townhouses were proposed to not be allowed to use sampling inspection protocols, even when certified using the ENERGY STAR Multifamily New Construction (MFNC) program. However, all other building types eligible to be certified using the ENERGY STAR MFNC program would continue to be permitted to use sampling inspection protocols.</p> <p>EPA posted a response to comments and a finalized policy announcement in alignment with the proposal in the Fall of 2023.</p>
				<p>Resolution: To reflect the sunset of the allowance to use sampling inspection protocols in the ENERGY STAR Single-Family New Homes program for homes permitted on or after 01/01/2025, the following sentence will be added to Step 4 of the ENERGY STAR Certification Process:</p> <p>“Using a Rater, verify that all requirements have been met in accordance with the Mandatory Requirements for All Certified Homes and with the inspection procedures for minimum rated</p>

Current ENERGY STAR Single-Family New Homes Policy Record

				<p>features in ANSI / RESNET / ICC 301, Appendix B. <u>All items shall be verified for each certified home and sampling protocols shall not be used.</u></p> <p>In addition, Footnote 11, which included the allowance to use sampling, will be deleted.</p>
01276	12/01/2023	Pacific Program Requirements (Version 3, Rev. 12)	Clarification	<p>ENERGY STAR Certification Process Section – Raters are to verify that items have been met within program-defined tolerances; not use discretion to discern intent of items</p>
				<p>Issue: The Certification Process Section contains statements regarding the verification of items on the program checklists that may incorrectly imply that Raters have the authority to interpret program intent, potentially leading to inconsistent implementation of the program requirements. Instead, it is the responsibility of EPA to ensure that each program requirement is sufficiently clear that all Raters can implement that policy consistently.</p> <p>Rather, the purpose of these statements was to clarify that minor deviations from a stated program requirement may be acceptable. Since the time that this language was first drafted, EPA has worked to define quantitative tolerances (e.g., Rater-measured ventilation rate must be within either ± 15 CFM or $\pm 15\%$ of design report value) to more clearly define how much variation is acceptable.</p>
				<p>Resolution: To better convey that Raters are to verify that checklist items have been met within program-defined tolerances, the following edits will be made to the Certification Process section:</p> <p>“The Rater must review all items on the Caribbean and Pacific Rater checklists. Raters are expected to use their experience and discretion to verify that the overall intent of each inspection checklist item has been met within program-defined tolerances (i.e., identifying major defects that undermine the intent of the checklist item versus identifying minor defects that the Rater may deem acceptable).”</p> <p>In the event that a Rater <u>determines that a program requirement has not been met</u> finds an item that is inconsistent with the intent of the checklists, the home cannot earn the ENERGY STAR until the item is corrected...</p> <p>In the event that a Rater is not able to determine whether <u>a program requirement has been met</u> an item is consistent with the intent (e.g., an alternative method of meeting a checklist requirement has been proposed), then the Rater shall consult their Provider.</p>

Current ENERGY STAR Single-Family New Homes Policy Record

				<p>If EPA believes the current program requirements are sufficiently clear to determine whether the item in question intent has been met, then this guidance will be provided to the partner and enforced beginning with the house in question.”</p> <p>In addition, the following minor edit will be made to Footnote 5 for consistency:</p> <p>“Certification shall only be allowed if the Rater has determined that no equivalent option is available that could meet the intent of the conflicting requirement (e.g., switching from exterior to interior slab edge insulation).”</p>
01239	12/01/2023	Pacific Program Requirements (Version 3, Rev. 12)	Refinement	Exhibit 1 – Removal of EER for cooling and heating equipment
				<p>Issue: Exhibit 1 includes an EER value for certain air conditioners and heat pumps, which may imply that such values must be met for a home to be certified. However, in practice, there is no requirement that equipment meet this level of efficiency. EER is not included in the ENERGY STAR Reference Design in the ERI Target Procedure. Furthermore, for air conditioners and air-source heat pumps, EER is not a minimum rated feature in ANSI / RESNET / ICC 301, the standard that underlies the performance target. As a result, such an input would not impact the performance of the home. For these reasons, displaying EER in this Exhibit could cause confusion for partners.</p> <p>Additionally, the Multifamily New Construction Program will be removing all instances of EER requirements for air-source heat pumps and air conditioners in the corresponding Exhibit for that program, so making the same edit for the Single-Family New Homes program would improve consistency.</p>
				<p>Resolution: For improved consistency and clarity, all instances of EER values for air-source heat pumps and air conditioners in Exhibit 1 will be removed. For example, the following edit will be made to the Heating Equipment section:</p> <p>“8.2 HSPF / 14.5 SEER / 12 EER air-source w/ electric or dual-fuel backup”</p>
01275	12/01/2023	Pacific Program Requirements (Version 3, Rev. 12)	Change	Exhibit 4 – Removal of Provider discretion to define ‘Permit Date’ and addition of allowance to use Rater’s first site visit
				<p>Issue: Exhibit 4 defines which Versions and Revisions are required to be used and is dependent, in part, on the permit date of homes. A footnote associated with this exhibit delineates the various ways that the permit date can be determined and includes an allowance for Providers to use their discretion when determining it. The allowance to use discretion may result in inconsistent implementation of the program requirements.</p>

Current ENERGY STAR Single-Family New Homes Policy Record

				<p>Resolution: To ensure more consistent implementation of the program requirements, the allowance to use Provider discretion to define ‘permit date’ will be removed. At the same time, an additional alternative to ‘permit date’ that is commonly used in the industry and results in a more conservative (i.e., later) permit date will be added, based on the date of the Rater’s first inspection. Another commonly used alternative in the industry, based on the permit application date, will not be added to the program because this could result in a less conservative (i.e., earlier) permit date than the program currently allows.</p> <p>As a result, the following edits will be made to Footnote 15:</p> <p><u>“The Rater may define the ‘permit date’ as either is the date on which that the permit authorizing construction of the building was issued. Alternatively, the date of the Rater’s first site visit or the date of the contract on the home is allowed to be used as the ‘permit date’. The permit application date is not allowed to be used. In cases where permit or contract dates are not available, Providers have discretion to estimate permit dates based on other construction schedule factors. These assumptions should be both defensible and documented.”</u></p>
01222	05/01/2023	Pacific Program Requirements (Version 3, Rev. 12)	Change	<p>Exhibit 2 – Allow homes with ductless mechanical systems to use National checklists</p> <p>Issue: Footnote 14 allows homes with standard mechanical HVAC systems and forced-air distribution systems to use the National Rater Design Review Checklist and National Rater Field Checklist in lieu of the Caribbean and Pacific Checklists. A Partner has asked whether this allowance could be extended to systems without forced-air distribution system (e.g., ductless mini-splits).</p> <p>Resolution: The intent of Footnote 14 was to allow homes with standard mechanical HVAC systems (in lieu of passive cooling features) to use the National Rater Design Review Checklist and National Rater Field Checklist. Despite the current wording in the Footnote, this intent applies even to systems without a forced-air distribution system (e.g., a ductless mini-split).</p> <p>Therefore, to clarify this intent, the Footnote will be revised as follows:</p> <p>“A home with a split air conditioner, unitary air conditioner, air-source heat pump, or water-source (i.e., geothermal) heat pump up to 65 kBtuh with a forced-air distribution system (i.e., ducts) is permitted to complete the National Rater Design Review Checklist, Version 3 / 3.1 / 3.2, and National Rater Field Checklist, Version 3 / 3.1 / 3.2, in lieu of these Caribbean and Pacific Checklists. In such cases, the Rater is required to keep electronic or hard copies of the completed and signed National Rater checklists and either an HVAC design report compliant with ANSI / RESNET / ACCA / ICC 310, and the National HVAC Design</p>

Current ENERGY STAR Single-Family New Homes Policy Record

				Supplement to Std. 310 for Dwellings & Units, for homes using Track A, or the National HVAC Design Report for homes using Track B.”
01294	12/01/2023	Pacific Program Requirements (Version 3, Rev. 12)	Change	Footnote 16: Continued use of Rev. 08, 09, 10, 11 and 12 HVAC Design Report
				Issue: Due to the effort required to collect the HVAC Design Report, partners have asked whether previously collected Rev. 08, Rev. 09, Rev. 10, Rev. 11 and Rev. 12 HVAC Design Reports can continue to be used after the release of the next Revision of the program requirements, so long as no aspect of the system design changes.
				<p>Resolution: Because the next Revision of the program checklists will not require collection of any additional information or impose any new requirements, and will maintain or increase compliance tolerances, a design documented using Rev. 08, Rev. 09, Rev. 10, Rev. 11, or Rev. 12 of the National HVAC Design Report would, by definition, meet the requirements of Rev. 13.</p> <p>Therefore, previously collected Rev. 08, Rev. 09, Rev. 10, Rev. 11, or Rev. 12 National HVAC Design Reports will be permitted to be used after the release of the next Revision of the program requirements, so long as no aspect of the building design changes. For building designs that are not identical to prior designs (e.g., due to new equipment that is rated in SEER2 instead of SEER), then a new HVAC Design Report must be completed and collected.</p> <p>To reflect this change, Footnote 16 will be updated as follows:</p> <p>“Homes certified under Rev. 123 of the program requirements are permitted to use <u>either any Revision of the National HVAC Design Report between Rev. 08, 09, 10, 11, or 12 and Rev. 13 of the National HVAC Design Report.</u>”</p>
01312	12/01/2023	Pacific ERI Target Procedure (Version 3, Rev. 12)	Clarification	Lighting, Appliances, & Internal Gains Section – Number of ceiling fans aligned with logic in ANSI / RESNET / ICC 301
				<p>Issue: A partner has asked for clarification about the number of ceiling fans the ENERGY STAR Reference Design is intended to have.</p> <p>For context, ANSI / RESNET / ICC 301-2019 requires ceiling fans to be equal in number for both the reference and rated homes. However, if the number of ceiling fans present in the rated home is not at least equal to the number of bedrooms plus one, then neither home is modeled with ceiling fans.</p> <p>The Pacific ERI Target Procedure was intended to apply the same logic. However, it states that the quantity of ceiling fans shall be equal to the number of bedrooms plus one “when</p>

Current ENERGY STAR Single-Family New Homes Policy Record

				<p>ceiling fans are present in the Rated Home”. The partner is unclear whether the ENERGY STAR Reference Design should be configured with ceiling fans when any ceiling fans are present in the Rated Home, or only in cases where the Rated Home has a quantity at least equal to the number of bedrooms plus one. The latter interpretation was the intent.</p> <p>Resolution: To clarify this intent, the language in the ‘Lighting, Appliances, & Internal Gains’ Section will be revised as follows:</p> <p>“Ceiling Fan: 122 CFM per Watt; Quantity = <u>Same as Rated Home per ANSI / RESNET / ICC 301, either 0 or</u> Number of bedrooms + 1 when ceiling fans present in the Rated Home; otherwise Quantity = 0”</p>
01206	11/10/2022	Pacific ERI Target Procedure (Version 3, Rev. 12)	Change	Exhibit 2 – ENERGY STAR Reference Design configured without on-site power
				<p>Issue: Partners have asked whether the ENERGY STAR Reference Design (ESRD) should be configured with On-Site Power Production (OPP) if such a system is present in the Rated Home. Because OPP is not one of the building components listed in the Expanded ENERGY STAR Reference Design Definition Exhibit and the document contains a footnote stating that “Any parameter not specified in this exhibit shall be identical to the value entered for the Rated Home”, one might infer that it is EPA’s intent for the ESRD to be configured with OPP.</p> <p>Such a configuration would create unintended challenges because the related Program Requirements specify that “on-site power generation may not be used to meet the ENERGY STAR ERI Target”.</p>
				<p>Resolution: It is not EPA’s intent to make the ENERGY STAR ERI Target more stringent in cases where the Rated Home has OPP. To align the ENERGY STAR ERI Target Procedure with EPA’s intent, a new row will be added to the end of the ENERGY STAR Reference Design Definition Exhibit with the Building Component listed as “On-Site Power Production” and the Definition listed as “None”.</p>
01262	12/01/2023	Caribbean & Pacific Rater Design Review Checklist (Version 3, Rev. 12)	Change	Partnership Status Section – Verification of Energy Rating Company partnership, Rater training and Rater credential
				<p>Issue: All National and Regional Program Requirements documents include partnership, training, and credentialing requirements for Energy Rating Companies (ERC’s) and Raters, as clarified in Policy Record 01261. These requirements are not reflected on the Rater checklists, which may result in Raters inadvertently overlooking them.</p>

Current ENERGY STAR Single-Family New Homes Policy Record

				<p>Resolution: To ensure that ERC and Rater partnership, training, and credentialing requirements are verified, two new Items will be added at the end of Section 1 - Partnership Status.</p> <p>The first new Item will read as follows:</p> <p>“Rater has verified and documented that their company has an ENERGY STAR partnership agreement using www.energystar.gov/ResPartnerDirectory.”</p> <p>A new footnote will be associated with this Item, as follows:</p> <p>“Raters are only required to document the partnership status of their company once, for the first home that the Rater certifies for them.”</p> <p>The second new Item will read as follows:</p> <p>“Rater(s) signing checklists attest that they have completed EPA-recognized training and are credentialed by a Home Certification Organization (HCO).”</p>
01252	12/01/2023	Caribbean & Pacific Rater Design Review Checklist (Version 3, Rev. 12)	Refinement	<p>Item 2.1 – Relocation of Footnote allowing prior Revisions of HVAC Design Report</p> <p>Issue: All National and Regional Program requirements contain the following Footnote, which allows partners to use the National HVAC Design Report from prior Revisions:</p> <p>“Homes certified under Rev. 12 of the program requirements are permitted to use either Rev. 08, 09, 10, 11, or 12 of the National HVAC Design Report.”</p> <p>There have been limited changes to that document across these Revisions. Therefore, the intent of this allowance is to reduce the burden on HVAC Designers and Raters by not requiring them to produce and collect new editions of the report, which would be substantially the same as the documentation that they already have.</p> <p>The current placement of the allowance is not optimal given that partners interact with the Caribbean & Pacific Rater Design Review Checklist more often than the program requirements documents.</p> <p>Resolution: To increase the visibility and usage of the allowance by partners, Footnote 7 of the Caribbean & Pacific Rater Design Review Checklist will be updated by adding this allowance at the end. The existing footnote will be removed from all National and Regional Program requirements documents.</p>

Current ENERGY STAR Single-Family New Homes Policy Record

01211	05/01/2023	Caribbean & Pacific Rater Field Checklist (Version 3, Rev. 12)	Clarification	<p>Item 3.2 – Override control is intended to be dedicated to that function</p> <p>Issue: This Item requires that a “readily-accessible ventilation override control [be] installed and also labeled if its function is not obvious (e.g., a label is required for a toggle wall switch, but not for a switch that’s on the ventilation equipment).”</p> <p>A partner has asked whether the program’s intent is for the override control to be dedicated to that function. For example, would it be permissible for a single toggle wall switch to both act as the override for a dwelling unit mechanical ventilation system and to power a general lighting fixture. In such a scenario, the light would be turned on when the dwelling unit mechanical ventilation system is operating and turned off when the system is not operating.</p>
01258	12/01/2023	Caribbean & Pacific Rater Field Checklist (Version 3, Rev. 12)	Clarification	<p>Item 3.1 – How to verify when the designer has provided multiple acceptable combinations of a design ventilation airflow rate and run-time</p> <p>Issue: The National HVAC Design Report is currently structured to accommodate a single combination of a design ventilation airflow rate and run-time. Raters are required to verify that the Rater-measured ventilation rate is within the program-specified tolerance relative to the design report value.</p> <p>Partners have noted that some HVAC designers prefer to specify a range of ventilation run-time and airflow combinations that would be acceptable, rather than a single combination. They have asked whether that is acceptable and how the Rater should verify that the ventilation airflow is within the program-specified tolerance in such cases.</p> <p>Resolution: As addressed in Policy Record #01257, designers are permitted to provide multiple combinations of a design ventilation airflow rate, run-time per cycle, and cycle time, all of which are acceptable to the designer.</p> <p>When a single combination of a design ventilation airflow rate, run-time per cycle, and cycle time are documented on the National HVAC Design Report, the Rater is not required to verify run-time of the ventilation system, because the design ventilation airflow rate is known.</p> <p>However, when multiple combinations are provided, the Rater is required to first assess the run-time setting of the installed system and use that to determine the corresponding design ventilation rate. The Rater-measured ventilation rate must fall within the program-specified tolerance relative to that design ventilation rate.</p> <p>To reflect this Footnote 17 will be updated as follows:</p>

Current ENERGY STAR Single-Family New Homes Policy Record

				<p>“The Dwelling Unit Mechanical Ventilation System air flows and local exhaust air flows shall be determined and documented by a Rater using ANSI / RESNET / ICC 380 including all Addenda and Normative Appendices, with new versions and Addenda implemented according to the schedule defined by the HCO that the home is being certified under. <u>Designers are permitted to provide multiple combinations of a design ventilation airflow rate, run-time per cycle, and cycle time. When multiple combinations are provided, the Rater shall first assess the run-time setting of the installed system and use that to determine the corresponding design ventilation rate. The Rater-measured ventilation rate must fall within the program-specified tolerance relative to that design ventilation rate.</u>”</p>
01325	12/01/2023	Caribbean and Pacific Rater Field Checklist (Version 3, Rev. 12)	Change	<p>Item 3.7.2 – Minimum separation distance reduced between air inlets and outlets of exhaust ventilation systems</p>
				<p>Issue: Partners have indicated challenges in locating dwelling unit outdoor air inlets on exterior walls of Townhouses, as well as multifamily dwelling units certified using the Multifamily New Construction program, that are at least 10 ft from the outlets of dwelling unit exhaust systems given the proximity to adjacent dwelling units and limited exterior wall area to locate intakes and outlets. A reduced separation distance would reduce the barrier to providing multifamily dwelling units and Townhouses with a dedicated supply of outdoor air.</p>
				<p>Resolution: EPA agrees that reducing the minimum required separation distance between air inlets and the outlets of both exhaust dwelling unit mechanical ventilation systems and local mechanical exhaust systems would increase the ability of project teams to design systems that provide outdoor air directly to multifamily dwelling units and Townhouses. For simplicity, the same allowance will be extended to other dwelling types eligible to participate in the Single-Family New Homes program. Note that the minimum required separation distance between air inlets and other known sources of contamination (e.g., combustion appliance vent terminations, vehicles) will remain the same.</p> <p>In considering this revision, it was also observed that the related footnotes should be re-organized to improve clarity.</p> <p>It was also observed that the current allowance for “balanced ventilation systems” to use smaller spacing requirements if instructed by the manufacturer should be more specific to balanced systems from one manufacturer, such as ERV’s or HRV’s, and should not be more broadly available to separate systems that may be ‘balanced’, but won’t have a single manufacturer’s instructions to reference.</p> <p>To reflect this change, Footnote 24 and 25 will be revised as follows:</p>

Current ENERGY STAR Single-Family New Homes Policy Record

				<p>24. Without proper maintenance, ventilation air inlet screens often become filled with debris. Therefore, EPA recommends, but does not require, that these ventilation air inlets be located so as to facilitate access and regular service by the occupant. Ventilation air inlets that are only visible via rooftop access are exempted from Item 3.7 and the Rater shall mark "N/A". The outlet and inlet of balanced ventilation systems shall meet these spacing requirements unless manufacturer instructions indicate that a smaller distance may be used. However, if this occurs the manufacturer's instructions shall be collected for documentation purposes.</p> <p>25. Without proper maintenance, ventilation air inlet screens often become filled with debris. Therefore, EPA recommends, but does not require, that these ventilation air inlets be located so as to facilitate access and regular service by the owner. Two alternatives to the required 10 ft. distance are provided: 1) inlets providing outdoor air to a dwelling unit are permitted to be ≥ 5 ft. of stretched-string distance from outlets of both exhaust dwelling unit mechanical ventilation systems and local mechanical exhaust systems, and 2) the outlet and inlet of ERV's and HRV's may use a smaller distance if allowed by the manufacturer of the system. If the second alternative is used, the manufacturer's instructions shall be collected for documentation purposes.</p>
01235	05/01/2023	Caribbean & Pacific Rater Field Checklist (Version 3, Rev. 12)	Clarification	<p>Signature Block - Pre-drywall inspection is always required; reinforce purpose of pre-drywall and final inspection</p> <p>Issue: Partners have periodically asked if there are alternative verification protocols available when a builder installs drywall before a home has had a pre-drywall inspection by the Rater.</p> <p>Step 3 and Step 4 of the ENERGY STAR Certification Process for the Caribbean and Pacific Program Requirements, respectively, states that "the Rater must review all items on the Caribbean and Pacific Rater checklists.. In the event that an item on a Caribbean and Pacific Rater checklist cannot be inspected by the Rater, the home also cannot earn the ENERGY STAR."</p> <p>In addition, ANSI / RESNET / ICC 301 requires visual inspection of multiple Minimum Rated Features per Normative Appendix B, including framing members and wall insulation installation, which cannot be completed if the features are concealed.</p> <p>Given these current policies, the only recourse when drywall has been installed prior to visual verification is to remove the drywall to allow the inspection of Minimum Rated Features of ANSI / RESNET / ICC 301 as well as the mandatory features of the ENERGY STAR Single-Family New Homes program (e.g. minimum insulation levels, air sealing details, and ductwork installed without kinks and bends). No alternative protocol has been identified that will deliver the same certainty as a pre-drywall inspection that all program requirements have been met.</p>

Current ENERGY STAR Single-Family New Homes Policy Record

				<p>Resolution: To reinforce EPA's current policy that a pre-drywall inspection is always required if drywall is to be installed, and that drywall must be entirely removed to fully verify all Items if it has been installed prior to the inspection, a new Footnote will be added after the "Rater Pre-Drywall Inspection Date" field, as follows:</p> <p><u>"Any Item that will be concealed by drywall (e.g., wall insulation) must be verified during the pre-drywall inspection.</u></p> <p><u>If drywall is installed prior to the inspection, then it must be entirely removed to fully verify all Items. It is not sufficient to remove only portions of drywall to inspect a subset of areas. Furthermore, it is not acceptable to complete a Sampled Rating on a home that has missed the pre-drywall inspection. Additional information is available in the Technical Bulletin: Pre-Drywall Inspection Is Always Required."</u></p> <p>While not directly related to the pre-drywall clarification, a new Footnote will also be added after the "Rater Final Inspection Date" field to clarify the purpose of that inspection, as follows:</p> <p><u>"Some Items can typically only be verified at a later stage of construction than when the pre-drywall inspection occurs (e.g., bath fan airflow). Any Item that has not been verified during the pre-drywall inspection must be verified prior to or during the final inspection."</u></p>
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